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ORIENTAL MEMORIES

THE AUTHOR IN 1905

ORIENTAL MEMORIES
OF A GERMAN DIPLOMATIST

BY

FRIEDRICH ROSEN

WITH TWENTY-EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS

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TO

MY WIFE

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PREFACE

IN this volume I have related some of my experiences in Oriental countries during a period of about forty years ending with the last century. I have not intended to write an autobiography, but have merely tried to give a picture of those countries as I saw them at a time when the influx of European ways and ideas had not yet obliterated much of their original character. A few old sketches which I am fortunate enough to possess, some of them drawn by my mother, will help to illustrate what I remember of Palestine as it was in my younger days.

I have not included in this book my recollections of India, Abyssinia or Morocco, limiting myself to what is generally termed the Near East. I may relate my experiences in India, which were as pleasant as they were instructive, in a future publication.

With regard to the people mentioned in these pages, some of whom have played a prominent part in subsequent political events, I have tried not to let the shadow of a later period fall upon the time I am dealing with in this volume. I speak of them as they appear in my memory and in my letters. If I succeed in giving a true and unbiased picture of bygone years, I hope to have made a step on the road which may in the future lead to the removal of the evil effects of the War and of propaganda which has poisoned the relationship of two nations between whom an armed conflict ought never to have been considered possible.

Fr. R.

BERLIN
March 1930

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ORIENTAL MEMORIES

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PART I

JERUSALEM

CHAPTER I

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS OF CAMPING AND TOWN LIFE—OLD SARACEN HOUSE—THE RICH MAN'S HOME AND ITS INMATES—OTHER NEIGHBOURS AND FRIENDS—TURKS, ARABS, JEWS AND CHRISTIANS—THE PRINCE OF WALES' VISIT TO PALESTINE—JERUSALEM AND ITS SURROUNDINGS BEFORE MODERNIZATION

HARRY CRAWFORD was unable to learn any language besides his own, which was English. He was about five years old, and I a little younger. His father, the Reverend Mr. Crawford, was an English missionary. He and his family had pitched their tents alongside ours under the branches of Abraham's Oak, near Hebron. This tree was equally remarkable for its exceptional size as for a tradition according to which Abraham bade the Lord rest Himself in its shade, as the Bible tells us. No one, of course, knew the real age of the tree, but it is certain that as far back as the time of the Crusaders it was looked upon as Abraham's Oak.

Under its widespread branches stood our tents and those of the Crawfords. On all sides were vineyards with ripening grapes. These were guarded by their owners, who had built temporary huts out of unhewn

stones; but the grapes were so abundant that we were allowed to pick and eat as many as we liked. In this we were joined by small Arab boys who, clothed only in a shirt, a belt, and a red cap, came to play with us. These urchins, of course, spoke only Arabic, a language which I had learned to speak at the same time as German. My parents preferred my playing with Harry to my seeing too much of my small Arab friends, who had never come into contact with soap. My mother made me understand Harry's lack of adaptability and said I must learn English if I wished to talk to him. This I then did, and soon picked up as much of it as was needed for our juvenile chats and games. I have kept it up ever since, and my mother, who was born and brought up in London, always spoke English to me and to her younger children. Harry Crawford's parents left Palestine soon after we were acquainted, and I have never met my friend again, nor heard of him; but if he is still among the living—and why should he not be?—and if this book by chance should fall into his hands, I wish to send him greetings and remind him of our early friendship more than threescore years ago. If I am now able to write these pages in English, as I have been asked to do, I owe this to Harry Crawford, who gave me the first incentive. Of course, I make no pretension to any English literary style; no man can write in another language as in his own. My ambition does not soar beyond the desire to make myself understood.

My father was, at that time, Prussian Consul at Jerusalem. King Frederick William IV of Prussia was much interested in the Holy Land, principally on account of a Protestant Bishopric which had been instituted in Jerusalem by Queen Victoria and himself. He had specially charged my father to look after this Bishopric.

In the summer, when Jerusalem was unhealthy, my parents used to go to some less unpleasant place and spend the hottest time of the year camping. Hebron

ABRAHAM'S OAK NEAR HEBRON IN 1864

From a Pencil Drawing by the Author's Mother

was their favourite resort. We children liked it on account of its wonderful grapes. We returned there several times. My education, when its time came, was limited to my learning and saying by heart a hymn every morning before breakfast. This I did easily, walking up and down between the vines with my hymn-book for half an hour. After breakfast I was free to roam about the vineyards and watch my friends flinging stones with a sling, just as their forefather David had done, or climbing down a deep well for a drink of cool water, or playing a game of *kora*. This game was no more nor less than golf, a marble serving as ball and bent sticks as golf clubs. I have often wondered whether the game so popular among our wealthy classes had not its origin in the game of these Arab boys.

The grapes were picked towards the end of the summer and thrown into the wine-presses hewn in the rock in the old Biblical days. They were squashed by the feet of two or three half-naked fellahs until the juice had all been squeezed out. As all the people around were Muhammedans, this juice was not made into wine, but boiled until it acquired the consistence of honey. This delicious condiment was called dibbs, and was eaten with bread. It was also used for the manufacture of halāwa or halwā, a kind of sweetmeat which is eaten and appreciated in all parts of the Near East.

When the great heat had passed we returned to Jerusalem—quite an undertaking in those days. First camels had to be procured and loaded with all the heavy baggage, such as tents, beds, furniture, kitchen utensils, etc. This work was invariably accompanied by the growling of the camels and by such loud and continuous talking and discussion by all the male Arabs near by that to a stranger it might have seemed menacing. But this was not the case; camels evidently cannot be loaded in silence. Longfellow apparently had no personal experience of Eastern travelling when he wrote:

'. . . and the cares that infest the day
Will fold their tents like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.'

We all rode on horseback or on donkeys through the quaint old town of Hebron, and through brushwood of stunted oaks. These are a variety called by botanists *Quercus Ægilops*. Their leaves resemble those of holly, but are greyish and much smaller. We used to pause for lunch at the 'Sealed Spring of Solomon', and then pass Rachel's tomb, leaving Bethlehem on our right, across the plain of Rephaim and the valley of Hinnom to Jerusalem, whose high walls had been visible for the last hour.

In those days there were no houses outside the city wall. It was considered too unsafe to live in the open country. The city lay at the top of a group of hills that fell abruptly into deep valleys on three sides. Its walls had been built of hewn stone at different periods, some enormous monoliths being attributed to Solomon, others to Herod, but the whole structure, as it stood, dated from the time of the Saracens after they had retaken the Holy City from the Crusaders. The heavy iron gates were closed at sunset; nobody was allowed to pass at night. To-day the original town almost disappears in the midst of its new suburbs, and in most places the city wall, with its turrets and battlements, is hardly to be seen. I have in my possession a number of sketches or drawings which represent the town as it has been from the days of the Crusaders until the time of its modernization. These sketches are now of as much historical interest as they are of great value to me.

The inner town, a maze of narrow, dark, and more or less dirty streets, was divided into several quarters—that of the Armenians, which was the cleanest; that of the other Christians; that of the Jews, which was the poorest and dirtiest; and that of the Moslems, which was the biggest and the finest.

Our house, the Prussian Consulate, lay in the Moslem quarter in a narrow street descending from the precincts of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to the Great Mosque, which was built after the Muhammedan conquest on the site of the old Temple. It is attributed to the Caliph Omar, and is one of the finest and most interesting buildings of the East, if not of the whole world. Many arches spanned our street, and gave it a quaint and gloomy aspect. Nobody would have suspected the existence of a fine and pleasant building behind the severe and irregular front of our house. To describe this house is almost impossible.

I will only say that after ascending a high staircase one entered a flight of open courtyards paved with white flagstones and shaded by enormous vines. These courtyards were not all on a level, but were separated by steps or by low, wide parapets containing flower-beds. They gave access to the rooms of the first floor. But there was yet another staircase, at the top of which one was surprised to enter a fairly large garden with many fine old trees, rich flower-beds, and a pond, as well as a verandah made fresh and cool by a Moorish fountain in red marble. This place was used as a reception hall in the warm season.

Walking along the middle path of the garden towards a high wall and passing through a low, heavy door, one entered a long, paved terrace with square holes protected by brick parapets. This terrace was the roof of a street. Looking down through the apertures one would see in the twilight horsemen, pedestrians, and strings of camels moving to and fro. One day, our Arab gardener, a native of Bethlehem, was leaning over one of these parapets when it suddenly gave way and he fell to the bottom. He was picked up and taken to the German hospital, where he died soon after. We were very sorry to lose Eliās; he was a good gardener and an honest man. I remember his little room near

the garden, the walls of which were covered with cheap Russian pictures of saints, the Bethlehemites belonging to the Greek Orthodox Church and, therefore, being co-religionists of the Russians. Thirty years later, when I myself became German Consul in Jerusalem, I asked our clergyman in Bethlehem to find me a servant-girl who could cook, and who would be willing to do other work. I was very much surprised when he said: 'She's already waiting for you; her name is Miriam. She says her father was in your parents' service, and died falling on to the street from the terrace. She is an old maid, and has waited all her life until you should return and become Consul here—a fact which she has never doubted.'

When I spoke to her, and asked for her terms, she merely answered, just as the people in Biblical times would have done: 'I am thy maid, and I have waited until thou shouldst come so as to serve thee, as my father served thy parents.'

The garden being, as I said but perhaps failed properly to explain, in the second story of the house, we were able to step from there on to the flat roofs of two of our neighbours' houses. One of these roofs offered a grand view of the domes of the Holy Sepulchre, and of the big mosques, and across the flat terraces and domes of white stone, on to the Mount of Olives. My parents' bedroom was situated over an archway that spanned the street which led to the Great Mosque. Above this you could see the little village of Tūr on the Mount of Olives, with a small minaret erected over the spot where the ascension of Christ is supposed to have taken place. There was access to the roof of this room from a yet higher house belonging to a Muhammedan neighbour. We were not aware that a small compartment on this roof was the abode of an old Arab Sheikh until one day, when the rains set in, a small inundation led to an examination of the water-pipes. It was found

AKBAT AT TAKĪEH. OLD STREET IN JERUSALEM WITH PRUSSIAN CONSULATE, THE AUTHOR'S HOME

From a Water-Colour Sketch by the Author's Mother

that these had been blocked up by our unknown neighbour's provision of onions.

Our two other neighbours I must mention because they were, in a way, attached to the Consulate. On one side lived the German clergyman, and on the other was the Hospice of the Prussian Knights of St. John. The Prussian clergyman, whose name the Arabs never could remember, was called by them Abu Daraj—Father of the Staircase—because a high stone staircase led to his dwelling. The Hospice of St. John had its entrance from a street parallel to ours, the well-known Via Dolorosa, the way Christ is supposed to have gone when He was led from the house of Pilate to Golgotha. Parts of these streets were so darkened by archways that children were afraid to pass through them alone; we knew from our Arab friends what kind of ifrīts (evil spirits) infested them and made them frightful.

There was no spring water at that time in Jerusalem except a limited supply conducted from the Sealed Spring of Solomon to the area of the great mosques. The rest of the town had to collect the rain-water in big cisterns which formed part of their houses. Our house had four such cisterns; these contained more water than we required, including the needs of the garden and of the flower-beds in the courtyards, and my parents were thus able to distribute this water among the most needy, especially among the Jews, most of whom were under Prussian protection. These poor people used actually to buy, and not cheaply, water that had been used by the wealthy for washing and bathing; I have seen this done as late as the year 1900.

I have said before that a high stone staircase led to the part of the building which we inhabited; below this were our stables and a succession of extensive vaults, which formed the substructure of the whole building. We sometimes explored these dark vaults, called by us *die Unterwelt*, by candlelight until at the end of them

we came to a small stone chamber, in the middle of which was a white Muhammedan tomb. We children used to shudder when we entered this place because we knew on good authority that a particularly terrible 'ifrīt' was guarding this tomb.

Of course, there was also a Turkish bath in this old Saracen house; it had no windows, but received its scanty light from a number of small, round holes in its domed ceiling, which were closed by small, thick greenish panes of glass. The effect of the sunbeams shining through these holes is used by Oriental philosophers to show the unity of God and all human souls. A Persian poet of the thirteenth century says: '. . . The light of the sun is separated into souls only as it breaks through the windows of individuals. If you look at the sun he is only one; the manifold is but a delusion.'

Among others in our retinue were three cavasses, several native Arab servants, a negro who acted as groom, and three German maids from Leipzig. It was curious to observe how quickly these girls learnt to speak Arabic fluently, though with a strong Saxon accent. The duty of the cavasses is more of a representative than of an operative character. They were chosen from good-class Muhammedan families, and enjoyed the highest respect among all classes of the population. When the Consul went out, one of them had to walk in front of him, dressed in blue cloth jackets gorgeously embroidered with gold and in wide trousers of tussore silk, a garment which contained enough material to clothe three families. They wore a silver-hilted sword, and carried in their hands a high staff with a big silver knob and a steel point. Woe unto him who did not make room soon enough for the Consul! Notwithstanding my father's protests, such an offender would receive a good knock, sending him to the next wall. On State occasions two or three cavasses would walk in front of the Consul, striking the points of their sticks

on the stone pavement in time to their tread, for after God the Consuls were the highest persons in Palestine: even the Pasha was not quite so much revered by the inhabitants. A 'fellah', peasant, after having seen the Pasha in Jerusalem, is supposed to have said when he returned to his village: 'I always thought the Pasha was a Pasha, but he is just a fellow!'

Our cavasses were strict Muhammedans. They kept their fasts and performed their five prayers regularly. Of course they never drank wine. Only Hassan, the first cavass, would accept a glass of wine once a year on the 22nd of March, to drink the health of the 'Prussian Sultan', King William I. Hassan was quite a character. In his younger days he had been a soldier in the Turkish army, and during this time he was posted to guard the Quarantine Camp at Jaffa. He had received strict orders to allow no one to pass, and, if disobeyed, to fire. When, one day, a man of rank tried to pass the line without paying heed to the call of a common soldier, Hassan shot him dead, as he had been bidden to do under such circumstances. But in the East, as elsewhere, doing one's duty does not always bring just recognition. The relations of the dead man demanded Hassan's blood, or 'blood money'. As Hassan could not pay, he would have been executed had not the military commander contrived to commute the sentence into imprisonment for life. Hassan believed that he would have to spend the rest of his days between the dingy walls of the Damascus dungeon ; but he vowed that if ever he saw the light of liberty again he would get more heavily intoxicated than anyone had been since the days of Noah. When Sultan Abdul Mejid ascended the throne he proclaimed a general amnesty, and Hassan was able to return to Palestine, where he conscientiously fulfilled his vow. After that, he would only drink one glass of wine a year, on the King's birthday. When speaking to my father, Hassan always used the Turkish

language, which he had learnt in the army; by doing this, he wished to show his association with the ruling classes of Turkish civil and military officers. There was no 'Arab movement' in those days, either in Palestine or elsewhere, and, in fact, the so-called 'Arab movement' is an entirely European invention, devised to promote the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. All Arabs who happened to have a smattering of Turkish would proudly use it wherever they could. As late as the year 1898, when I visited the Chief of the great Arab tribe of Aneze near the ruins of Babylon, I was surprised to hear this Bedouin chief speak Turkish to a personal attendant of his: this gave him a somewhat higher standard, in the eyes of his fellow-tribesmen, than the ordinary son of the desert could aspire to.

All our native servants spoke Arabic among each other, and to us. This language was also spoken by our groom, a negro from Darfur, in the Sudan, who had gone on a pilgrimage to Mecca and, on his return, had remained in Jerusalem, where he found a small colony of his countrymen. These Sudanese were called Takrūri; they were appreciated on account of their honesty and their reliability. Our man, Haji Bekir, had been engaged as a night watchman after one of our tents had been pillaged at night near Jerusalem; he was armed with a wooden mace and a bell-mouthed blunderbuss. His garments were always spotlessly white, and cleanliness seemed to be the principal preoccupation of his life; he was faithful and devoted to a degree rarely encountered among white men. He used to be sent out riding with me in the mornings before breakfast when we were in town, and he told me many curious things about his African home,—among others, of the wild ass and other animals which he had seen there. On one of our rides we saw many migratory birds that had halted on the hills of Judea on their way to warmer climes. Haji Bekir knew them all well, and told me

everything about them. He was very interested to hear that these same birds spent the summer in Northern Europe. When we got home, I showed him coloured pictures of these birds in a book of natural history: he looked at them for a long time, and at last declared that none of these birds ever came to the Sudan. This astonished me, for the pictures were very clear and bright in colour.

'But don't you recognize these?' said I, pointing to a stork and a crane.

'All birds in my home,' said he, 'have two sides, and these have only one. No such birds exist in Africa.'

This illustrates how recognition of a pictured object is founded on convention, and is an acquired faculty. Later on, Haji Bekir drew pictures himself, mostly 'felukas'—the ships of the Nile, which he learnt to depict with some skill, and also only on one side of the paper. Haji Bekir's devotion was the cause of his premature death. When my father was appointed to Belgrade as Consul-General and Diplomatic Agent of the North German Confederation which had in the meantime been formed, he insisted that he must follow our family. He was warned that he would not be able to endure the severe Serbian winter, but in vain. He came, caught consumption, and died after a few months.

Opposite our house, in the narrow street, Akbat at Takieh, lived the richest man of Jerusalem, Musa Efendi, afterwards Musa Pasha. His name commanded the respect which power and money engender among all people. I remember him as a fine old gentleman, with a grey, well-trimmed beard; he wore a white turban and a long coat of quiet colour, either green or brown cloth, and always carried a long staff in his hand. The plain exterior of his house, built of red or yellowish stones, did not betray the splendour of its interior, but it was imposing to look at because of its towering height, which increased every year, so that eventually it had to be supported by a new archway, which spanned the

street and was supported by our house. When my father, who was displeased at this contiguity, asked him whether he was building a new Tower of Babel, Musa Efendi gave a very characteristic reply.

'You see,' he said, 'I'm an old man, I must think of my health. When, in the month of Ramadan' (this is the month during which the days from dawn to sunset are passed in fasting), 'the beggars roam at night through the streets singing and drumming, until now I was always obliged to get up and walk barefoot across the stone pavement to throw alms down to them, for it is said that whoever hears a beggar in the month of Ramadan and gives him nothing, thereby closes the Door of Mercy. But now my sleeping apartment is so far away from the street that I do not hear the beggars any more. Besides, this apartment offers another advantage. The Prophet —Peace be on him!—has said: "Whoever beholds the four Gates of Jerusalem opens for himself the eight Gates of Paradise." Now, from my upper chamber, I constantly see these four Gates, even without moving, because I have disposed mirrors for this purpose.'

Of course, the Prophet had meant the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, but Musa Efendi had preferred to take the Prophet at his word.

Musa Efendi had two wives, Sitt Salma and Sitt Aisha. I very well remember the beauty and grace of these two ladies, having often accompanied my mother on her visits to Musa Efendi's harem. They wore purely Oriental costumes—their over-dresses were always of shining white linen, or some such material. In their reception room there was an abundance of mirrors, chandeliers and musical boxes. The floor was not covered with carpets, but with fine straw mats, and there were some chairs, more for ornament than for use. The ladies and their visitors would sit on finely embroidered mattresses and cushions, which were placed on the matting. When dinner was served, we used to sit on

these cushions in a circle, round a small octagonal stool inlaid with mother-of-pearl, such as one sees nowadays in many houses in all European countries, where probably few know of its original use. Female slaves would then place a large, round copper tray, containing all the dishes, on this stool, while the bread was put on the floor beside each seat. Knives and forks were not used. With her delicate white hands, the nails of which were tinged with henna, Sitt Salma would carve the meat and distribute the victuals on the plates in front of us. Rice, chicken, and many sweetmeats were the principal dishes. After the meal, a slave girl would pour lukewarm water from a ewer of chiselled copper over our hands, at the same time handing each of us a towel interwoven with silk. Sometimes the ladies came to call on my mother. On these occasions my father and all the men had to leave the house, as the Prussian Consulate did not provide separate apartments for the harem. One day when they were paying my mother a visit, the German maid dropped a cup and broke it. The Arab ladies promptly said, 'And you don't beat her!' This was meant as a compliment to my mother, for her magnanimity and forbearance.

Notwithstanding the outward appearance of harmony in Musa Efendi's household, real happiness did not exist there. The jealousy of the two wives worked stealthily, and the sudden death of Sitt Salma's first-born son and afterwards the illness and death of Sitt Aisha gave rise to rumours which, however, were surely unjustified. The memory of this Arabic house haunted me long after I had left Jerusalem, and was one of the attractions that was to draw me again to the East. Curiously enough, this wish was fulfilled many years later. I shall have to say something about my meeting Sitt Salma again.

Next to Musa Efendi's house, opposite our stables, was the small shop of Sheikh Ahmad, whose green turban

denoted his descent from the Prophet. He used to sit there all day long, making flutes of different sizes. As soon as he had finished one of these instruments he would play spirited, and yet soft and melancholy airs on it. When his supply of reeds was exhausted, Sheikh Ahmad would mount his donkey and ride down to the Valley of the Jordan, a long ride which must have taken him two days; he would return on foot with his animal heavily laden with reeds. I would often sit in his shop, watching him work and listening to his music. A little flute which he made for me is still in my possession.

We had yet another neighbour, whose appearance was very different from that of the flute-maker. He was a dervish and the keeper of the Takieh, the meeting-place of his Order. Our street, Akbat at Takieh, took its name from this establishment. He and his son, Arif, had long, fair, matted hair and wore nothing on their heads, unlike all other Muhammedans. Dervish-dom, however, played a secondary part in Jerusalem, which was one of the strongholds of orthodoxy, although it flourished in Cairo and Constantinople.

Descending the street towards the east one had to pass under a very low archway, in the shadow of which another terrible 'ifrīt' would frighten all the children of the neighbourhood. The débris of centuries had gradually raised the soil so much that the archway had become quite low. The streets of the inner town are in all probability the same as they were in the days of Christ. New buildings have been erected on the accumulated débris caused by destructions of war, and by the occasional collapsing of houses. Lower down, the street led to the Haram ash Sharíf, the great platform of the two big mosques—the Sakhra and the Aksa. Here the ground had not been raised by débris. The first of these mosques, generally called the Mosque of Omar, undoubtedly stands on the very place of Solomon's Temple. I never visited this sanctuary until much

later; it was much too sacred to be exposed to the unbeliever's tread, but the priesthood were accommodating enough to admit visitors at the rate of three Turkish pounds a head. It formed the centre of the Muhammedan quarter, which we inhabited. With its old Saracen houses, it was then the most select part of the city; later on, it was abandoned by its Muhammedan inhabitants and invaded by Galician Jews, and now the Yiddish-German dialect is mostly spoken there.

At the time I am speaking of, the Jews in Jerusalem were made up of two distinct races, the Spanish and the Eastern Jews. The former, as we know, are the descendants of the Jews whom Ferdinand and Isabella banished from Spain in 1492; they still speak Spanish. The latter had mostly come from Galicia, Russia and the Danube principalities (Rumania); their language was German, that is to say, the German-Jewish jargon. I do not know how it came about that they were under Prussian protection, since most of them were originally Austrian or Russian subjects, but I remember how much trouble these protected subjects gave my father. Sometimes they filled the whole Chancery and the flat roofs around it. They would conduct prolonged lawsuits against one another which my father, as Consular Judge, had to settle, or was supposed to settle. This task was not an easy one because it was almost a habit with them to deceive the Consul. On one occasion, when my father's patience was almost exhausted, the elder of the Jewish community, Laib Aron Levi Hirsch, a patriarch with a long white beard, and a stick made from the tooth of a narwhal, offered to bring the proceedings to an end by the sworn evidence of two hundred witnesses. Immediately after all these men had sworn according to their rites, the falseness of their evidence was proved. In reply to my father's stern remonstrances, the Elder said: 'In a small oath, Mr. Consul, perjury is permissible with *goyim* (Gentiles).'

All Jerusalem knew old Tulpenthal, perhaps the most prominent figure of that whole community. Long and lean, with a long grey beard, and corkscrew curls hanging on his cheeks, clad in a cloak of green material striped with black, a pointed high hat with a broad brim on his head and a long staff in his hand, I see the old man still, wandering through the town and its immediate surroundings; one seldom went out without meeting him. I will relate one of the many stories that were told about him, because it is very characteristic of the Jerusalem of those days. Tulpenthal had given his daughter in marriage to a certain Steinheim who later had undergone baptism and had acquired some wealth and position with the aid of the English Mission which had converted him. He was the first man to build a big house outside the town walls. Tulpenthal did not share the indignation of his co-religionists about his son-in-law's apostasy, but rather tried to use it for business purposes. Whenever Steinheim did not give him enough money, old Tulpenthal would compromise him by his company, and thereby extort further contributions. This, at last, went beyond the limit of Steinheim's endurance, and one day when the old man knocked at his door, he had a loaf of bread thrown out of the window to him, to show that he considered him nothing but a beggar. He hoped by this means to put an end to Tulpenthal's importunities, and actually for some time all intercourse between Mr. Steinheim and Tulpenthal ceased. But the latter was meditating a way of reopening his lucrative relations with his wealthy son-in-law. One day, as Steinheim was watching the workmen digging the ground for the foundations of his house, an old Arab Sheikh appeared, who, after gazing a long time into the pit, said the mysterious words: 'Wallāhi, hadi al bālakīya!'—'By God, this is the balakiya!' Steinheim took little notice of this incident at the time, but when, a few days later, a

second, and afterwards a third, Sheikh appeared and pronounced the same sentence, Steinheim became uneasy and inquired what those words might mean. He was told that evidently the treasure of King Balak must be hidden in this locality, and that Steinheim, if he were able to lift it, would become the richest man in the world. Readers of the Bible will remember that Balak was the king of Moab who tried unsuccessfully to bribe the Prophet Balaam (Numbers xxii). How immeasurably great must Balak's treasury—'. . . the house of silver and gold'—have been to tempt God's Prophet? and what had become of this fabulous wealth? The Bible tells nothing of this. But now the riddle was to be solved. It was in lucky Steinheim's ground that the treasure was hidden! But what could be done to lift it? Steinheim's messengers were successful in finding one of the three Sheikhs, who, when questioned, told him that the treasure was guarded by three demons, and that these could only be removed by a first-class magician. But where such a magician was to be found the Sheikh was unable to say. At this moment Tulpenthal appeared on the scene. No sooner had he heard what had passed than he was able to give advice. Egypt was the country where the best magicians were to be found. Tulpenthal was ready to bring one to Jerusalem. Provided with ample money, the old fox betook himself to the Land of the Nile, and soon returned with the much-desired magician. The incantation was not unsuccessful. The first of the three demons was disposed of after much time and trouble, and corresponding cost, but the magician's power was not adequate to deal with the other two demons. However, this magician knew of a colleague who might be more successful. The second magician arrived, through the medium of Tulpenthal, and after a time settled the second demon, but, unfortunately, he could do nothing further, and it proved impossible to find a sorcerer competent to remove

the third demon. So the treasure of Balak remains even to-day hidden under Steinheim's house, but Tulpenthal's finances were, of course, much improved by the transaction. I have told this story in detail to show the close connection which still existed between the Jerusalemites and the Old Testament. They lived in the old Biblical traditions without taking much heed of the thousands of years that had intervened.

Steinheim, in the course of time, developed from a simple money-changer into a distinguished banker. Notwithstanding his Prussian status and nationality, he and his family adopted the language and habits of the English. He became one of the principal pillars of the Anglo-Prussian Protestant community. In those days every Jew who was converted to Christianity automatically became an Englishman, a transformation which often brought with it a change of name—for instance, Herr Weissmann after his baptism was called Mr. Wiseman.

I must now say a word about the Anglo-Prussian community. The English and Prussian Governments, wishing to create a counterbalance to the two great Christian communities, the Roman Catholic and the Greek Orthodox, had founded a Protestant Bishopric in Jerusalem, which was to comprise all German and English Protestants in the Holy Land. As Queen Victoria as well as King Frederick William IV of Prussia took a personal interest in this undertaking, the King had specially commissioned my father to devote himself to the Bishopric, and entered into a personal correspondence with the Bishop, a Swiss ecclesiastic named Gobat, a remarkable man who did a great deal of good in Jerusalem. Frederick William IV had a romantic predilection for the forms of worship of the Byzantine Church, a predilection which already in those days was shared by many adherents of the Anglican High Church. In one of his letters to the Bishop, he asked this dignitary

whether he too were not attracted by the Greek Orthodox rites, and whether he did not believe that they represented the original form of primitive Christian worship; but the good Bishop, who was entirely taken up by his practical work—the foundation of schools and the like—told the King that he had never had time in his life to ponder over such questions. I saw this letter in a book containing Bishop Gobat's correspondence, but I quote from memory. I do not think there were many in Prussia who shared the King's interest in the Oriental Church, but in England this tendency has grown steadily. It has drawn the High Church more and more in the direction of ritualism, so that in its outer form it very much resembles the Greek and Roman churches. This movement has been curiously strengthened by a linguistic coincidence. The apostolic creed, which is common to all Christianity, says 'I believe in the Holy Common Christian Church', the word 'common'—which Luther has omitted—is in the Greek original 'Katholike'. In the English text this word has been preserved in its original Greek form—'I believe in the holy Catholic Church'. The adherents of the High Church lay special stress on this word, and wish to be considered Catholics, not taking into account that the German word 'Gemeinsam' (common) is nothing but the translation of the Greek word 'catholic'. When, in 1910, a German clergyman asked the Bishop of Gibraltar for permission to hold a service in the English Protestant Church in Tangier, the Bishop answered that he could not place the consecrated Catholic Church at the disposal of Protestant sects! Such tendencies were already noticeable in Jerusalem in the 'sixties, notwithstanding the perfect harmony that had existed up to then between the two parts of the community. Naturally, on Sunday my parents used to go to Church, where English and German services were held alternately. Bishop Gobat was able to preach in both languages, and besides him,

there were several English clergymen and one German. In Christ Church, on Mount Zion, the two foremost benches were reserved for the two Consulates. I still remember the tedious length of the otherwise most edifying sermons of the Bishop, and I also remember my childish prayers that the sermon might be short, which, however, were apparently never heard. I cannot say that my wish was justified, for the majority of the community liked a long service, as this was the only respite that old Jerusalem could afford them. Social gatherings devoid of religious character hardly existed; the last dance in the Holy City had taken place when King David danced in front of the Ark of the Covenant as it was brought into the city. One Sunday, when as usual we went to Christ Church for Divine service we were surprised to find that, instead of German hymn-books, a German translation of the English Common Prayer Book had been placed in each pew. It bore the inscription, stamped in gold, 'Das Allgemeines Gebet-buch'. The whole service was henceforth conducted according to the Anglican rites, a proceeding which was very much resented by the Germans, who refused to attend it under these circumstances. In consequence, the German service was henceforth held at the Prussian Hospice of St. John in the Via Dolorosa. The Prussian Government was thereby induced to build a church of its own, but it was a long time before funds and a suitable site were to be found.

When, in 1869, the Prussian Crown Prince attended the opening of the Suez Canal and then visited Jerusalem, the Turkish Sultan, Abdul Mejid, availed himself of this opportunity to bestow on the Crown Prince part of the ruins of the extensive establishment which had harboured the Knights of St. John in the days of the Crusaders. My readers are sure to remember that the Crown Prince Frederick William had married Princess Victoria, Queen Victoria's eldest daughter, and that he

later ascended the throne as Emperor Frederick. The ground given by the Sultan is adjacent to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; it contained a well-preserved chapel which was for many years used as a German church, until in 1898 the Emperor William II opened the Church of the Saviour erected in another part of the old ruins.

Personal relations between my parents and Bishop Gobat, as well as all the English residents of Jerusalem, did not in the least suffer by the separation of the community. There was not, however, the same interest in Berlin for the Anglo-Prussian Bishopric after the reign of Frederick William IV had come to an end and especially after the period of Prussia's ascendancy had set in under the leadership of Bismarck, who did not share the romantic ideas of the old King.

During the time that preceded the separation, Jerusalem was visited by the Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward VII. Queen Victoria was very anxious that her son should know the Holy Land, and asked that this should be done under proper guidance. My father was known to be the best authority on Biblical antiquity, and he was charged to accompany the Prince. The Prince's visit was the cause of an appreciable extension of archæological knowledge, for British influence was strong enough at that time to induce the Turkish authorities to open the Mausoleum of the Patriarchs in Hebron to the Queen's son. This sanctuary had not been visited by Christians since the days of the Crusaders. It was only accessible to Muhammedans who, as is known, share the veneration of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob with Jews and Christians. My father, who well knew the description of the cave given by the Crusaders, was able to identify the different localities, and to publish a report of his investigations. The Prince was at that time a modest youth of agreeable manner, but he could not muster much interest in the holy sites that were

shown and explained to him. My father told me that he had listened to the information patiently, and that he gave the impression of a young man of normal intelligence but of limited knowledge. Nothing at that time betrayed the great part he was destined to play in riper years as King Edward VII. I still possess a photograph with his signature, Albert Edward, which he gave my father.

In those days Jerusalem was visited by many crowned heads, among them the last King of Naples, the Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria and the Russian Grand Duke Constantine. The latter took special interest in the work of the well-known German theologian Tischendorff, who brought to Europe a very old text of the New Testament, the Codex Sinaiticus, which belonged to the Greek Monastery on Mount Sinai.

The Roman and Greek Catholic Churches were endowed with far more splendour than the Protestant community. They possessed the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Basilica of the Birth of Christ, and other holy places in common. This condominium was partly shared by other Oriental Churches. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is a conglomeration of many churches, chapels and galleries, and, among other sanctuaries, contains Calvary, the Tomb of Christ, the Stone on which His body was anointed, the Column of Flagellation, and the crypt in which the Byzantine Empress Helena is supposed to have found the true Cross as well as the bones of the three Kings. All this, of course, made a deep impression on a child's mind, but, nevertheless, I was always conscious that the holiness of these places was based on tradition, and not necessarily on fact. At the same time I was much repelled by the frequent violent fighting between adherents of the different creeds, which often ended in bloodshed. I remember that sometimes, when we returned home from Church, the cavass who accompanied us would take a round-

about way to avoid the precincts of the Holy Sepulchre, where firing was going on. The big Christian festivals seldom passed without trouble, and an unlimited use was made of whips made from the hide of the hippopotamus. It was only due to the intervention of the Muhammedan Turkish troops that peace among the Christians was restored when they were celebrating the Birth or the Resurrection of the Saviour. In Bethlehem the principal conflicts used to take place in the locality where Christ's Manger was supposed to have stood. Thirty-two years later, when I was Consul in Jerusalem, this state of affairs, so shameful to the whole of Christianity, had not improved. The Protestant community was not, of course, affected by these quarrels, not being in possession of any of the holy sites.

The principal preoccupation of the Protestants in the East centred around the Second Coming of the Lord. Englishmen and Americans vied with each other in predictions as to the approaching end of the world. The coming of the Day of Judgment would be preceded by endless prayer meetings. My father refused to join in these practices and was much pitied by the pious, who prayed that the Lord might soften the heart of the obdurate Prussian Consul. When, however, the predicted day came with no change taking place and everything going on as usual, the prophets were by no means disconcerted at the non-fulfilment of their prediction, but at once proceeded to fix another date for Doomsday.

In 1895 a very clever American missionary, Doctor P., once told me he had just read a book sent to him from America which showed that all previous calculations of the Second Coming of the Lord were wrong. Instead of counting the thousand years of the Jews, all predictions hitherto were based on the thousand years of the Gentiles. He believed the prophecies in this new book to be absolutely certain, and added: 'If this is so, then the Lord may be in by next fall!'

As I have said, my father took no part in these excesses of piety. He explained Biblical history to me during our walks in the city and its surroundings, where stones speak and where every site gives ample opportunity for instruction. I soon learnt to discern the different periods in which the walls of Jerusalem had been built—the old Israelitic, the Herodian, the Saracen. In those days rock tombs were to be seen on all sides of the town, mostly dating from the days of the New Testament. The majority of these have now become almost invisible under the growth of the new suburbs that surround the city. These stone tombs give an idea of what the Tomb of Christ or that of Lazarus must have looked like. I knew the outskirts of the town, hill and dale, including Bethlehem, Hebron and other places, and their relation to Biblical history. There were also many Greek and Roman remains, Roman milestones and Greek mosaic floors. Not only were many of the localities almost unchanged, but their inhabitants had also retained the ideas, manners and customs of their distant forefathers, which are described so well both in the Old and New Testaments.

I have tried not to allow the remembrance I have of old Jerusalem to be blurred by the impressions of later date when the town began to extend and become greatly modernized. Before the Western invasion, Jerusalem was something unique in the whole world, both in regard to its history and its picturesqueness. As I have previously said, in those days there was not a single house outside the city wall. The gates were closed every Friday during the Muhammedan midday prayer, and every night at sunset. Whoever remained outside at that time could spend the night in company with the hyenas and jackals which prowled about the adjacent burial-places. The gates were guarded by soldiers who kept order in their own way according to a system which allowed them to levy contributions from the peasants

BEDOUINS AWAITING THE OPENING OF THE GATES OF JERUSALEM, CLOSED DURING FRIDAY SERVICE

From a Pen and Ink Drawing

who brought victuals into the town. I have myself seen these guardians of law deprive a camel-driver of one of his best animals. Such proceedings were sanctioned by custom and tolerated under the name of 'ancient injustice'.

In Jerusalem, as in all Oriental towns, the bazaars were one of the most prominent features. The finest of these long vaulted streets was the bazaar of the dealers in spices. The fine odour of Oriental essences and perfumes filled this passage, in the recesses of which respectable Muhammedan dealers were seated. Every day in the streets of the inner town there was a motley crowd—Christians, Jews, Muhammedans, townspeople, peasants, veiled women, children, hammals (porters) and drivers of donkeys, mules and camels. All these people wore their different national costumes. There was no attempt at cleanliness or hygiene anywhere—dead dogs and cats would lie in the street until Time finally did away with them. The only scavengers were the numerous 'wild' dogs, who devoured anything that was even half eatable. Every one of these dogs had its fixed stand, which he had conquered and had to defend every day. They never forgot anyone who had once given them a morsel, and would wag their tails each time they again met him. The Arabs, especially the Muhammedans, despise dogs and consider them unclean, but they appreciate them in so far as they afford them the opportunity of an occasional inexpensive charity.

Not much better than the life of these dogs was the existence of the numerous beggars in and outside the town walls. These would display their often repulsive infirmities, especially elephantiasis and leprosy. The lepers inhabited small huts inside the Zion Gate; otherwise they were not allowed to enter the town. They would sit in front of the gates and at the sides of the roads, sometimes in rows of six or seven or more, imploring the charity of the passers-by in hoarse whispers.

This was always done in the form of blessings: 'Allah yudīmak!'—May God preserve you!—'Allah jahfadh aulādak!'—May God guard thy children!—and so on. Whenever they saw a youngish woman, the blessing would be 'Allah yab'atlik sabi!'—May God give you a boy! A speedy fulfilment of this wish would not, under all circumstances, perhaps have suited the lady so blessed. Since, according to Muhammedan views, the infidels will not be admitted to Paradise, these beggars had invented a special blessing for Christians—'May God overlook you!'—the idea being that a small mistake of this kind might well be possible in the rush and turmoil of the Day of Judgment. It was impossible to look at these poor lepers without deep compassion: one after another their limbs would fall off, leaving only the stumps of their hands and feet, whilst at the same time the cartilage of their noses and larynxes fell victim to the dreadful disease. While we were still in Jerusalem an asylum was erected for these miserable people, but this proved a failure at that time, because the lepers could not be induced to remain there: the better food was welcome, and would sometimes cause them to make a short stay at the asylum, but they did not appreciate the cleanliness and order which reigned there, and preferred the liberty of beggardom with all its squalor and misery, so that most of the time the asylum was empty. In a similar way, the orphanage conducted by German deaconesses was only appreciated by the population in so far as the children were properly fed and clothed. The excellent education, comprising reading, writing and arithmetic, in German and in Arabic, was looked upon by the relations of the children as a calamity, which unfortunately could not be avoided unless one relinquished the advantages. This orphanage confined itself to the children of the native Christians—I know of only one Muhammedan who was brought up there, her name was Warda (Rose). She was a lovely and

sweet-tempered girl, and so intelligent that she soon became the favourite of her teachers. But as she grew up to be a young woman, that is to say, when she was thirteen years old, her presence in the Christian house was very much resented by her co-religionists, and the authorities demanded her immediate dismissal. The German Consul at that time protested, and refused to hand the girl over against her will to those who had not looked after her when she was small and destitute. It was finally arranged that she should go to the Sarai, Government building, accompanied by the dragoman of the German Consul, to state whether she really wished to remain with the deaconesses. The officials of the Sarai declared that the presence of the dragoman might influence her answer, and asked that she should step into the next room for a moment. After ten minutes had elapsed and she had not reappeared, the dragoman inquired how long the examination was going to last.

'Examination? Why, she has departed with her husband.'

And so it was. A young man had been kept in readiness, and immediately she entered the room, as the officials had requested, the marriage service had been read, and Warda had become the wife of a young fellah.

Not only did we know the whole town with all its houses and ruins and mysterious nooks, but also its picturesque surroundings. In less than an hour's time we could reach, even on foot, the top of the Mount of Olives, which was then a low barren hill, on which were a few sparse olive trees. From there one could overlook the area of the two big mosques, and behind it the white town with its domes and minarets, the whole surrounded by the high medieval walls. Turning one's back on Jerusalem towards the hills of the desert of Judea, one could see the Dead Sea embedded like a sapphire in its red and yellow setting; beyond this, the mountains of Moab displayed their ever-varying and beautiful colours.

Bethany and other places mentioned in the Bible were often visited. On the southern slope of the Mount of Olives was a small village, originally a Bedouin settlement, Abu Dis. Perhaps this is the Bethphage of the New Testament. Abu Dis was the name of the Sheikh, a dignified Bedouin whom we often visited to order straw mats for our house. Whenever we entered his precincts we were received with truly Biblical hospitality. The women would not let us go before we had tasted fresh bread, which they immediately prepared; they conversed with us while we watched them knead the flour and water into a dough, which they seasoned with leaven. Then loaves flat like pancakes were formed and placed into the *tābūn*—an oven heated with sheep's dung over which pebbles had been placed. The bread was soon cooked over these pebbles; it had a delicious flavour even if eaten without being steeped in oil, as is the Arabs' custom. The reception of the visitors, the words used, and the customs observed were so like the description of similar events in the Bible that it gave one the impression that, as far as the rural population is concerned, nothing had changed in Palestine for the last two or three thousand years. The Sheikhs of Abu Dis had in former times earned their livelihood by attacking and robbing pilgrims going to Jericho and the Jordan, for in this respect, too, it was just the same as what the New Testament tells us of a man going to Jericho and falling among thieves. But lately the Pasha of Jerusalem had made an arrangement with Abu Dis, according to which this gentleman was to give an escort to the pilgrims, thus safeguarding them against robbery. Whoever was not willing or able to pay this escort could not expect the people of Abu Dis to guarantee his safety. In my earlier days, these escorts, consisting of men in Bedouin costume, mounted on good horses, and armed with long lances, were most picturesque. But when I once rode down

THE PLAIN OF REPHAIM (NOW COVERED BY MODERN SUBURBS), WITH JERUSALEM IN THE BACKGROUND

From a Pencil Drawing

to the Jordan in 1890, the escort had dwindled to one man on foot, who carried an antiquated blunderbuss. During the summer and autumn when there were no pilgrims, the people of Abu Dis made very fine mats from the reeds of the Jordan. These mats were to be seen in almost all the houses of Jerusalem. The Sheikh's son, whom I had known as a little Arab boy who went about naked, I met later as a much respected nobleman. When, in 1898, the German Emperor visited Jerusalem, this Sheikh cut a very fine figure on account of his picturesque attire and his beautiful mare. To pay him a compliment, the Empress made some one tell him that she admired his horse: without a moment's hesitation the Sheikh dismounted and placed the reins in the hands of the Empress, who was driving in a carriage. The Empress, of course, could not dream of accepting such a gift, which would have meant a big sacrifice on the part of the Sheikh, but Abu Dis was very much hurt at his present being rejected. It was the interpreter's fault that such an incident should have happened at all. Instead of saying, 'The Empress admires your mare,' he should have said: 'Subhān ellazi khāliq-hā!'—Praise be to Him who has created her!—or he ought at least to have added: 'Mā shā Allāh'—Whatever God wills He can create,—even such a beautiful mare.

We very often visited Bethlehem; it was only an hour's easy ride from Jerusalem. In those days Bethlehem was not much more than a big village. It contained the church, in which the place of Christ's birth was shown, and was visited by innumerable pilgrims who came from all parts of the globe, especially from Russia. This influx of strangers seems to have originated the idea of opening a baker's shop in Bethlehem, but for a long time the Elders strongly opposed this, because, they said, it would be shameful if bread were sold in their town.

'Does there exist a house in Bethlehem', they argued,

'which would not willingly receive a stranger or guests, and give bread to the hungry?' Later, however, the Bethlehemites thoroughly mastered the art of extracting as much money from pilgrims as is done by the inhabitants of other sacred places on earth.

I will only mention here one of the many curious spots near Jerusalem, because it has had at all times a particular attraction for me. On the Scopus, the northern spur of the Mount of Olives, lay, and still lies, the desolate little village of Anathoth, the home of Jeremiah. It is now called Anāta. From here that strange figure sallied forth to fling his mighty defiance in the face of the rulers of Jerusalem. The village stands near the edge of a deep, rocky ravine, which is not seen until one is almost on its edge. Many natural and artificial caves pigeon-hole the red rocks on either side of this narrow gorge. They were used in early Christian times and up to recent date by anchorites, but they are now deserted. Several other rocky gorges going down to the Jordan valley are still inhabited by Greek monks. At the bottom of the ravine, just at the back of Anathoth, is a spring, the water of which strives to reach the plain of Jericho. The name of this spring is Al Fara, or Farat, which latter is the so-called *status constructus* or genitive of the Semitic languages. The word 'fara' means mouse in Arabic, as does the corresponding word 'para' or 'parat' in Hebrew. This word differs in writing only by one little dot from the old Hebrew name of the Euphrates. In the thirteenth chapter of Jeremiah comes the following passage:

'Thus said the Lord unto me, Go, and buy thee a linen girdle, and put it upon thy loins, and put it not in water. So I bought a girdle according to the word of the Lord, and put it upon my loins. And the word of the Lord came unto me the second time, saying, Take the girdle that thou hast bought, which is upon thy loins, and arise, go to Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole of the rock. So I went, and hid it by Euphrates, as the Lord commanded me. And it came to pass after many days, that the

Lord said unto me, Arise, go to Euphrates, and take the girdle from thence, which I commanded thee to hide there. Then I went to Euphrates, and digged, and took the girdle from the place where I had hid it: and behold, the girdle was marred, it was profitable for nothing. Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Thus saith the Lord, After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem. This evil people, which refuse to hear my words, which walk in the stubbornness of their heart, and are gone after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, shall even be as this girdle, which is profitable for nothing.'

It must seem very strange to anyone at all acquainted with the geography of the East that Jeremiah should have been sent to the Euphrates to hide a girdle and sent a second time to find it there, quite apart from the fact that the Euphrates in its course through the plains of Mesopotamia is not conspicuous for its rocky banks. A journey from Jerusalem to the Euphrates would have taken a man like Jeremiah about six weeks, either on foot or on an ass. He could not have gone thither in a straight line on account of the lack of water in the Syrian Desert, and because of the danger from nomad Arabs who at all times infested that region. A solitary traveller had, therefore, to go due north as far as the vicinity of Haleb (Aleppo), to reach the Euphrates near the present village of Meskene. It is difficult to believe that the Euphrates can be meant in the quoted passage: it is more likely that there has been a mistake in the reading at a time when the Bible was interpreted by people to whom Palestine was unknown. Evidently the prophet was bidden to hide the girdle in one of the rocky caves of the Farat valley near his native village of Anathoth. This very plausible explanation has been rejected by some archæologists, but their arguments are by no means convincing. Most of those who have written on the subject make the mistake of calling the spring near Anathoth '*Ain Fāra*', the Spring of the Mouse, whereas its name is only Fāra (fārat), the Mouse, as it evidently was in Biblical times.

CHAPTER II

Great Changes in Europe—Departure from Jerusalem—Jaffa—Egypt—The Levant in the Days of Napoleon III—Austria after her War with Prussia

DURING the last years of our sojourn in Jerusalem great changes were taking place in Europe. The old German Confederacy, the outcome of the Congress of Vienna, only loosely connected the different German countries, including the Austrian Empire, with its considerable partly non-German appendices like Hungary. The existence of two big rival German States in it was a condition which could not last. In 1864 Bismarck's statesmanship once more brought about a joint action of Prussia and Austria in the war against Denmark, which was in possession of the two German provinces of Schleswig and Holstein. It was a short campaign, the success of which could not have been doubted from the outset. The condominium of Prussia and Austria in the newly acquired country had soon led to open conflict, and in 1866 war had broken out between them. In this war only a few northern States had joined Prussia. Hanover, Brunswick, Saxony and all the southern States, Bavaria, Württemberg and Baden, had joined hands with the great Austrian Empire, which included Hungary. Notwithstanding its inferiority in numbers, the Prussian army, as we know, had won the war within seven weeks. The Austrian army was decisively beaten at Sadowa, and peace concluded soon after. By the Peace of Nicolsburg Austria was left in undisputed possession of all her dominions. It had been one of the greatest feats of Bismarck's states-

manship to spare Austria any kind of humiliation when the King of Prussia and all his army were intent on entering Vienna and taking part of her German provinces from her. But some of the lesser States which had fought against Prussia were annexed by her. Austria left the German Confederacy, which then ended, and was replaced by the North German Confederacy: the term 'German' was thenceforth limited to the subjects of this Confederacy. It was difficult for us to accustom ourselves to include the Austrians no longer under this denomination. The personal friendly relations between the Austrian and the other German residents of Jerusalem remained unchanged; they never ceased to look upon themselves as belonging to the same nationality. It also struck me when, in 1867, I spent a summer with my parents in Austria, that there was no resentment towards Prussia to be noticed among the Austrians, although less than a year had elapsed since the war. Most of those with whom we came into contact sought the causes of their defeat in the deficiency of their own organization. I remember an Austrian colonel discussing this subject with my father and saying: 'Eighteen Grand Dukes! just imagine, sir, eighteen Grand Dukes in our Army! How could one expect not to lose the war?' Through Bismarck's admirable management of affairs Germany became once more a powerful and respected country, although the southern States were not yet politically connected with the North German Confederacy. A new era had come for all Germans all over the globe, including the small community in Jerusalem.

My father, who had spent fourteen years of his life in this forlorn place, was unwilling to remain there longer, especially since he and all of us were beginning to suffer more and more from the effects of the bad climate. He applied for leave, and we left Jerusalem with the idea of not returning there again. In those days, travelling from Jerusalem to Germany was quite an undertaking.

The journey from the Sacred City to the seaport of Jaffa alone took us three days. The distance is now covered in a few hours by train or by motor. We set out in June, 1867, starting in the afternoon to avoid the intense heat. We were accompanied for a few miles by most of the European and many of the native residents of the town, who followed us on horseback or on donkeys as far as Kolonia. Towards evening we reached our first stage, the Castle of Sheikh Abu Ghosh. The hereditary chiefs of Abu Ghosh had formerly lived by waylaying pilgrims and other travellers on the road that connects Jerusalem with the coast. They had by this means gained some wealth and a respected position, which they continued enjoying when the days of highway robbery had come to an end. They now extended their hospitality to the same class of people whom in former times they would have robbed. I need not say that pecuniary remuneration was expected from Sheikh Abu Ghosh's guests, but the due forms of hospitality were always observed. I was told to ride ahead to demand admission. The eldest son of the Sheikh came out and took me by the hand, and the Sheikh himself came forth to meet my father. In the interior of the plain stone building the steps of the stone staircase were so high that women could hardly ascend them without help. The object of this was to hinder an invading enemy from reaching the inner apartments without some delay. The sleeping accommodation was very simple. There were two guest rooms with divans along the walls: these were stone benches, on which mats, mattresses and rugs were placed. All the males were shown into one of the rooms, and all the females into the other, where they could make themselves comfortable on the divans. We started next morning while it was still quite dark; the air from the hills was bitterly cold, but when the sun rose and we had passed through Bab al Wad, the Gate of the Valley, into the Plain of Sharon, the cold was followed by scorching

JAFFA BEFORE ITS MODERNISATION

From a Water-Colour Sketch by the Author's Mother

heat. It was late in the afternoon when we reached our next station, the little town of Ramleh, which I knew well. The only feature of this place which appealed to me at that time was an old tower which dated from the time of the Crusaders. I don't know how often as a boy I went up this tower to count its steps. It was said, and was true in my case, that each counting gave a different result—a phenomenon which did not seem to be entirely explained by the decayed condition of the stairs. How often have I been reminded of the tower of Ramleh in later years when verifying the accounts of the Consulates or Legations confided to me! We received a very kind welcome and much good cheer in the Franciscan monastery of Ramleh. In conversing with the monks my parents spoke Italian which I understood quite well from my knowledge of Latin. The third stage was a short one. We arrived in Jaffa before noon. We put up at the house of a German, who owned a mill situated in the same street as the house in which, according to tradition, St. Peter had lived when he visited Jaffa. The millstone was turned by an unfortunate mule which had to walk in a circle, blindfolded. The miller had arranged some rooms for occasional travellers. This was the first attempt at an hotel in Jaffa.

As our ship did not leave until two days after our arrival at Jaffa, we had time to visit the town and its famous orange gardens; but the great sight at that time was a group of wooden houses erected on the sands by an American religious sect that had come to Palestine to await the Second Coming of the Lord. These houses had arrived in sections, all numbered, and ready to be put together. But when we visited these buildings they were quite deserted. The Americans had found the place unhealthy, and when their religious expectations remained unfulfilled, they had returned to their homes. Later on, German colonists from Württemberg, the so-called Templars, bought these houses and founded a small German

colony there. This was the first German settlement in Palestine, from which several others have sprung. The founder of this sect was a certain Christoph Hoffmann who had come with his wife as pioneer to Jerusalem. They arrived one day at the Prussian Consulate in a state of complete exhaustion, never having ridden a horse before; they were both girt with sabres, as true scouts, I suppose, should not be unarmed. They had hurried to Jerusalem in order not to miss the day of the coming of the Lord which, according to their calculation, was very near. When this anticipation was not realized, the material and earthly instincts of the settlers increased in the same proportion as their religious and spiritual enthusiasm abated. Owing to their wonderful energy and endurance, and also, it must be said, to the survivors inheriting the property of the numerous victims of the climate, the 'Templars' attained a certain well-being, and lived in their villages much in the same manner as German peasants.

We also visited an Arabic-Armenian family in their beautiful orange grove. The water used for irrigation of these gardens was pumped by means of a water-wheel which was turned by a mule in the same manner as the mill in the town I have mentioned before. The stream was made to flow through the reception-room, where it filled a marble basin sunk in the floor. In this season there were no oranges, but in the spring the trees are covered with the golden fruit, whilst, at the same time, the blossoms fill the whole region with their scent.

Our ship, a paddle-steamer of the Austrian Lloyd, took us as far as Alexandria, where we had to await another boat.

It was interesting for us children to see an Egyptian town, because Egypt was in those days far ahead of Palestine in every respect. We admired the fine buildings on the 'Place des Consuls' where our hotel was situated, and still more the many carriages, all the more

as wheeled traffic was quite unknown in Jerusalem in those days.

It was great fun for us boys to talk Arabic to the young Egyptians we met. The difference in the two dialects was not great enough to hinder our understanding one another. We also visited the seaside place of Ramleh, which in those days consisted of the railway-station and three houses.

The development of Egypt had made great strides under *Said Pasha*, who had succeeded his father, Mehemed Ali Pasha, as *Vali* or Governor-General of Egypt. He was the first ruler of Egypt who had received a European education. He did away with monopolies, reformed the antiquated system of taxation, and abolished slavery. It was he who seriously took up the scheme and began the building of the Suez Canal. But his reign was too short (1854 to 1863) to carry out that great work, and his well-deserved fame as an enlightened ruler was eclipsed by his nephew and successor, Ismail Pasha, who obtained the title of *Khediv* from the Sultan and completed the Suez Canal, which was opened with great ceremony in 1869 in the presence of a number of European monarchs and princes.

In 1894 I was fortunate enough to meet Ismail Pasha on a steamer going from Trieste to Constantinople. It was to be his last journey, for he was very ill and died soon afterwards. But notwithstanding his age and ill-health the old Prince's conversation was most fascinating and instructive. He told me many interesting episodes of his life, especially about his friendly relations with Napoleon III, Francis Joseph of Austria and of that Emperor's unfortunate brother Maximilian, who was court-martialled and shot after having been installed as Emperor of Mexico and then abandoned by Napoleon III. I remember the deep impression the sight of the palace of Miramare, near Trieste on the Adriatic, had made on my youthful mind in 1867 when I was told

that the Empress Charlotte, Maximilian's wife, was interned there, having become insane at the news of her husband's tragic end. There she lived with her mind darkened by madness for sixty years.

My recollection of Ismail Pasha was revived when in May, 1929, I made the acquaintance of his son, Fuad, King of Egypt, in whom I found the same mixture of wisdom and conversational talents I had admired in his father.

I have inserted a curious sketch drawn by Karl Haag, a German painter, who was known in his day for his true and, at the same time, artistic renderings of Eastern life. It represents Said Pasha reviewing his Albanian troops. The Turkish inscription reads: 'Said Pasha, Vali of Egypt, 28 January, 1858,' and 'Efendimiz chōk yasha!'—May our Master live long! These were the words the soldiers were taught to shout as they passed their ruler.

At the time of our short visit to Alexandria all the Egyptians who came into touch with Europeans spoke Italian besides Arabic. Italian was the common language of the Levant. Its use probably dated back to the days when Venice had exercised a dominating political and commercial influence over the eastern half of the Mediterranean. Since Austria inherited Venice she adopted Italian as the language of her commercial fleet and her business relations with the East. All the officers and men on the Austrian mail boats, most of them Dalmatian Slavs, were made to speak Italian. It is a political curiosity that Austria through many decades and up to the outbreak of the World War has spent many millions to promote the use of Italian, the language of her most dangerous competitor in the Adriatic and in the Levant.

When I saw the Near East again in 1885 it struck me that Italian had been replaced by French in Asiatic Turkey and also to a certain extent in Egypt, although in the latter country English was fast becoming the

SAĪD PASHA, RULER OF EGYPT, REVIEWING HIS TROOPS

From a Pencil Drawing by Carl Haag, 1859

language mostly used by the inhabitants in their dealings with Europeans. This change was probably due to the great prestige Napoleon III enjoyed in Asia as well as in Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century. English influence in Turkey was paramount especially after the Crimean War, but France had reaped the *gloire* of the victory over Russia. The French Government made ample use of the favourable disposition of Turks and Levantines by establishing French schools, colleges, churches and hospitals in all important towns and in many country districts where she could hope to prepare the population for her plans of expansion. This was principally the case in Syria, including Palestine.

Germany followed very slowly in the wake of the other European Powers, and it took many years before she began to compete modestly with English, French, Italian, Russian trade or enterprise. The first time a German passenger ship visited the coasts of the Eastern Mediterranean was in 1889, when Albert Ballin undertook a cruise with a ship of some size, the *Augusta Victoria*. But even after this Germany occupied a back seat among the nations interested in the East—until in 1898 a German company obtained a concession for the extension of its Anatolian railway in the direction of Baghdad. The great fuss that was made about this scheme was by no means justified by its real importance, but was due to political motives emanating from Russia.

PART II

ACROSS PERSIA ON HORSE-BACK

CHAPTER I

DEPARTURE FROM INDIA—MASKAT—THE GULF OF OMAN AND THE PERSIAN GULF—FISH-EATERS, PIRATES, PEARL-FISHERS—BUSHIRE

I AM not going to speak in this volume of India, where I spent some fifteen months under particularly agreeable circumstances. I cannot look back on that period of my life without a feeling of gratitude to those who did so much to make it profitable and pleasant for me, and it was much to my regret that circumstances obliged me to return to Europe.

When at length I had made up my mind to leave India, I did not want to choose the sea route again. I should have liked to have gone across Afghanistan and Persia on horseback, but Afghanistan in those days, and for a long time after, was a country into which Europeans were hardly ever admitted. The Indian Government did all it could to hinder people going there because, to a certain extent, they were held responsible for anything that might befall them. The Afghans are a very interesting nation, and have many excellent qualities, such as fine physique, courage, great energy, love of poetry and music; but human life is not of great value to them. When one of the first English travellers penetrated Afghanistan—I think it was Burton, but am not sure of it—he wandered

through the interior disguised as a Dervish, accompanied by a faithful Indian servant. His knowledge of Persian and Arabic enabled him to pass everywhere unrecognized. He was highly esteemed by the population because he was able to write talismans for them in Arabic. He gradually acquired an odour of sanctity, and people would flock round him to kiss the hem of his garment. In one village he had been especially feasted, and was sitting writing talismans when his Indian servant whispered into his ear in Hindustani: 'Sahib, arise at once! We must flee. Your life is in immediate danger.' In vain did Burton protest, pointing to the crowd of admirers around him. 'Get up and follow me,' was the servant's pressing answer. When they had left the village behind them, Burton asked: 'What on earth made you tell me to leave this place in such haste? No one would have hurt me; the people regarded me as a saint.'

'That's just it,' said the Indian. 'I had been listening to a council held by the Elders where it was resolved to kill you because, they said, it would be a very good thing for the village to have the tomb of a saint in it!'

So there was no idea of my travelling across Afghanistan. Once I had penetrated as far as the Khyber Pass under official escort. This had been my first experience in a Persian-speaking country, but we had not been allowed to go a step beyond Ali Masjid, where the locality began to be interesting.

The only other land route which was open to me lay across Persia, but to get to the Persian port of Bushire I had to undergo a fourteen days' voyage from Bombay through the Arabian Sea, the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf. This route I resolved to take, and was fortunate enough to find a travelling companion in Monsieur Fernand d'Orval, a Frenchman who had been travelling in India as a globe-trotter. M. d'Orval, a tallish, fair man from the north of France, had served in the Franco-German

War of 1870–71; as leader of a patrol he had captured a small German post commanded by an officer. It is characteristic of the spirit of that time that M. d'Orval and his captive became, and remained, intimate friends after this incident. He spoke German fluently, a little Russian, and English remarkably well. He had made ample use of the great hospitality shown by Anglo-Indians, and had gathered valuable information about travels in Persia from some of his hosts.

On the 6th of April, 1887, I sailed from Bombay by the British India Steamship *Java* to Karachi, the most westerly port of India, where I had arranged to meet my travelling companion. Our voyage from there was favoured by fairly good weather notwithstanding the 'Shamāl', the north-westerly breeze which freshens those hot seas during a great part of the year, blowing in our faces.

Among the few first-class passengers was the Indian assistant of the British Resident of Bushire, a fine-looking, middle-aged Indian, Abdur Rahīm Hakīm, who knew all the languages used in that part of the world, Hindustani, Persian and Arabic, besides English, which he spoke perfectly. He gave me much interesting information about the places and the people on both sides of the Gulf. We also had a pleasant companion in an Indian merchant going with his family to Mauritius. I spoke Hindustani to him. The tender light-brown skin of his pretty three-year-old daughter was literally covered with heavy gold ornaments; her father explained that this was her less valuable set of jewellery, only to be used when travelling. This infant was not at all shy with me, and would say to her father: 'Mayn is gore-ko chacha kahtī hun'—I call this white man uncle. This child's mother and the other Oriental ladies were hidden from the gaze of men huddled together in a hot cabin, until Captain Skinner had an awning put up for them on deck at the stern of his ship.

We landed at different ports on either side of the Gulf, the first of which was the small but interesting old town of Maskat in Arabia. As we passed the rocks that hide the cove of Maskat, very interesting scenery appeared before our eyes, the white line of the sea-front of Maskat, flanked by sunburnt and barren cliffs, presenting a quaint and picturesque sight. Maskat is supposed to be one of the hottest spots on the globe. Persian envoys who had been sent there by Shah Abbas in the beginning of the seventeenth century had reported that, in Saadi's words, their swords had melted in their scabbards, and that their marrow was being boiled in their bones! When we landed we perceived that this sea-front consisted practically only of two long stone buildings which had been erected by the Portuguese during the short period of their sway over parts of India and the adjacent seaboards. One of these buildings was now occupied by the Resident or British Indian Agent, the other by the Sultan of Maskat. We visited the Resident, Colonel Mocler, who received us with much courtesy, and told us many interesting things about Maskat and its people. He asked us whether we wished to call on the Sultan, and announced our visit there.

On entering the Palace, which was the bigger of the two Portuguese buildings, we were saluted by the Sultan's body-guard, consisting of a line of men with drawn swords. Opposite to them on the left was a large cage in which was a magnificent 'Mesopotamian' lion. The lions of Northern Arabia and Mesopotamia have not the mane so characteristic of the African lion. A few days before our visit one of the Sultan's enemies had come to the outskirts of the town and sent a message to the Sultan as follows: 'If you agree to let bygones be bygones, I will come and salute you; if not, I will retire into the interior and know that you continue to be my enemy.' Reassured by the Sultan's reply, he came to the Palace; but when he passed between the lion and the armed

body-guard, the latter attacked him suddenly and cut him to pieces. Fortunately, this sort of treatment the Sultan reserved for his subjects only, and we had nothing to apprehend as we passed on to the staircase, at the top of which the Sultan Seyid Turki and his two sons, Seyid Faisal and Seyid Timur, were awaiting us. The Sultan was a fine, distinguished-looking Arab of medium height, clad in simple white garments. He wore on his head a turban of white linen interwoven with yellow silk, and on his feet brown leather sandals with a white pattern embroidered on them. A beautiful broad filigree silver dagger, with a bent blade and scabbard, was stuck in his belt. He took my hand and led me to a seat in the airy hall that overlooked the sea, whilst his eldest son, Seyid Faisal, conducted M. d'Orval. This youth seemed to be the son of a negress, which digression tainted the fine Arab lineage dating from prehistoric times and which thus became lost to the Royal family. Later he succeeded his father to the throne. The Sultan was much pleased when he found that I could speak Arabic, although I was at that time very much out of practice and prone to substitute Persian or Hindustani words for their Arabic equivalents. The coffee was served in small cups, as is usual among the Arabs, and was of an exquisite flavour. When it was finished, we were made to eat a sweetmeat which is a speciality of Maskat, called halwa, but was not the same as the halwā so much used in Syria or Persia. It was a sort of starch pudding or thick jelly, served in small earthenware bowls. Its taste was not particularly good, but the Sultan said it was very cooling, and for this reason it is exported to the many warm places where Maskat sailing vessels call. When we had finished the meal, the Sultan and his sons partaking only of the coffee, he said to me: 'What have you come to see in this desolate place which consists of only two buildings and some miserable huts, of burnt rocks and a waterless desert behind them?' Happily I remembered an Arab

proverb which says: 'Sharāfat al makān bil makīn'—The excellence of the dwelling is in the dweller. This pleased the Sultan very much, and he asked me whether I had any wish that it was in his power to fulfil. It was well that M. d'Orval did not understand this question, because he would have asked, as he afterwards told me, for the Sultan's beautiful dagger. However, I had had enough Oriental training to reply: 'My wish is a long life and a happy reign for your Majesty.'

After the Palace we visited the town, which looked more like a fair than a permanent dwelling-place. It consisted of mud huts thatched with reeds and mud. As we passed along the streets a young, dark-skinned, but not uncomely Somali girl removed her mask (which the women of Maskat use instead of a veil), so that I should see her features. She said she was a slave, and her master was willing to sell her; would I not buy her? She only cost 70 rupees (about £5). She would go with me wherever I liked, and serve me in every way I wanted. Of this offer, however, I did not avail myself, but was content to buy her mask, which I still possess. My translation of our conversation for M. d'Orval was a very free one!

Behind the town of Maskat there was a field of lucerne, which in springtime sufficed to give the Maskat horses and donkeys a special treat. This year, however, it was devoured by an elephant we had on board. It was just enough for one meal. This elephant was a present from Lord Dufferin, Viceroy of India, to the Shah of Persia. He was ultimately landed at Bushire with some difficulty, and when on shore was taken in charge by Persian soldiers, who put him into a space enclosed by a high wall, and demanded a large entrance fee for exhibiting him to the public! The poor horses and animals of Maskat were fed entirely on dried fish; it was odd to see camels, donkeys and horses munching dried herrings or sardines. Even the Sultan's thoroughbred mare I saw eating dried fish, which was her daily food.

The opposite coast of the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf was called by the army of Alexander the Great returning from India the Coast of the Ichthyophagi, or Fish-Eaters. One of the most desolate places on this coast is the small town of Gwadur. I knew an Englishman and his family who had been stationed there for many years; he was an official of the Indo-European telegraph station there. His children had grown up fine and healthy, partly fed on milk which tasted of fish: I do not think Mr. New had to spend much money on cod-liver oil! The term 'the Coast of the Fish-eaters' was also applied to the southern shore, but later on the latter has appropriately been named the Pirates' Coast.

The town of Maskat does a considerable trade in dates, which come from oases in the interior of Arabia. The time of the date harvest would have been one of prosperity for the Maskat merchants if the influx of money had not regularly attracted the Arabs of the surrounding country to make an onslaught on the town. The British Resident told us that the arrival of the enemies at the gates of Maskat was every year a signal for the army of the Sultan to disappear in the cellars and caves of the city, and order was for the most part upheld with the aid of one of the small British gunboats that cruised in the Gulf. The Sultan, of course, had to resort to any means, be they ever so cruel, to do away with the most dangerous of his adversaries.

About twelve years later I happened to meet in Palestine two delightful German flappers riding wildly on frisky Arabs, and bringing new life into the prevailing dullness in Palestine. They were there with their mother, then an old lady and widow of a German merchant of the name of Ruete. She was the daughter of a Sultan of Zanzibar, and had fled with a young German over the roofs of her father's palace to a ship which brought her to Hamburg. She had become quite European even in her outward appearance and manners, and

her daughters did not betray any trace of Oriental origin. When we were speaking of journeys we had made, and I happened to tell Frau Ruete I had seen Maskat, she said: 'Oh, then I suppose you know my brother Turki?' This was the same Sultan who was supposed to throw his enemies into the lion's cage. The Sultans of Zanzibar were a branch of the Royal family of Maskat. Notwithstanding her European dress she had all the dignity of an Oriental princess. Frau Ruete was recognized by the priests of the Mosque of Omar in Jerusalem, when she visited that sanctuary with us. When we were shown a very fine old hand-written Koran, she read a passage of it aloud in such a way that the Arab priests exclaimed: 'Only a descendant of the Prophet could read God's Word with such a beautiful accent!' She spent a great part of her life in Syria, and died not long ago. Mr. Rudolph Said-Ruete, her son, who was formerly in the Prussian army, now lives in London. He has recently written a remarkable book on the history of one of his ancestors, *Said Bin Sultan, Ruler of Oman and Zanzibar (1791–1856): His Place in the History of Arabia and East Africa.* Foreword by Major-General Sir Percy Cox, G.C.M.G., G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I.

We visited all the important ports in the Gulf, including the curious islands of Bahrein, famous for their pearl fisheries, and watched the divers being lowered to the bottom of the shallow waters to bring up the shells. Their whole diving apparatus consisted of a peg of goat's horn to close the nostrils. The water near the shore of these islands is so shallow that boats cannot land, and donkeys come a good way out to the sea to take visitors on shore. Bahrein donkeys are probably the best breed of their kind. They used to sell at a price amounting to £50 sterling per head, whereas an ordinary donkey would cost about £1. They in the asinine race are equivalent to Arab horses in the equine race.

During the lengthy cruise from Bahrein to Bushire a

very painful incident happened to M. d'Orval. During the journey he had been eagerly gathering information of any kind from everybody on board, and had taken copious notes in his notebook of all he was told, sometimes even at meals. These records he would afterwards condense and transfer in very tiny writing into small booklets, throwing his original notes overboard. This work occupied him for several hours each day. We were almost in sight of Bushire when M. d'Orval, on returning to the saloon after an absence of a few minutes, was horrified to discover that all his carefully written notes had gone. All endeavours to solve the mystery of their disappearance proved fruitless; it was impossible for the wind to have carried them away through the narrow port-hole of the low saloon. This incident showed the suspicion with which every movement of a Frenchman at that time was followed by zealous servants of the Anglo-Indian authorities. It is true that my friend's eagerness for information might have looked suspicious. During our whole journey he was looked upon as a spy or a secret political agent of Russia, and I frequently had to assure inquirers of the absolute innocence and political insignificance of my French friend's diaries. He never intended, nor indeed was he capable, of accomplishing any such political task. Some years later, this feeling was reversed; everything that the French said or did was approved, whereas if a German sneezed somewhere in the Persian Gulf, it was regarded as an attempt to shake the foundations of the British Empire.

On the 19th of April we anchored at Bushire, where our land journey was to begin. We had intended putting up at a caravanserai in the city. Abdur Rahīm Hakīm, the Indian doctor, told us that it was quite out of the question for us to stay anywhere but with Colonel Ross, the British Resident. Before we landed we received a pressing invitation from Colonel Ross, and were soon most comfortably lodged in his fine house, and enjoyed his and his family's

amiable hospitality. I had previously met Colonel Ross several times in India, and had been struck by his knowledge of an immense part of Asia, as well as by his very humane views on government. He was not undeservedly called the uncrowned King of the Persian Gulf. He exercised his influence in those remote and, at that time, quite uncivilized regions, more through his personal authority and knowledge than by the limited naval and military forces that were at his disposal. The two things which were incumbent on him were the maintenance of peace and order and the suppression of slavery. He was clever enough not to interfere more than was necessary with the customs and ideas of the native population. The Indian doctor whom I have just mentioned was, as he told me, invaluable to him. In all the ports we had called at the doctor had been greeted on board the *Java* by the respective Arab chiefs. At Lingah he had introduced a young Arab Sheikh to me, of whom he spoke with great admiration. 'This young man,' he said, 'has distinguished himself at the early age of sixteen by murdering his uncle under particularly difficult circumstances, and thereby taking his place as the leader of his tribe.' It must be explained that the uncle in his turn had murdered the young man's father so as to take his place. Unlike Hamlet, the nephew had not hesitated to cut his uncle's throat at his coming of age. Public opinion expected such an action from the young man; if he had failed to do so, he would have been considered by his people 'not to be his father's son.'

CHAPTER II

Overland Trip to Teheran—Ascending the Passes —Shiraz—Visit to the Tombs of Saadi and Hafiz— Persepolis—Tombs of Darius and Cyrus

TWO pleasant days spent in Colonel Ross's house sufficed to complete our preparations for our inland journey. Four mules were procured for ourselves and baggage to take us across the coastland and the difficult mountain passes to Shiraz, a journey of eight long marches. Four dreadful passes had to be climbed; they were called the Stone Ladders by the Persians, and the road that led across them was indescribably bad. Skeletons of mules that had fallen or been thrown off the narrow track in some parts covered the bottom of the ravines. The country was desolate, but picturesque. Between the *Pass of the Maiden* and the *Pass of the Old Woman*, we crossed the southern Persian forest region, consisting mostly of oak trees and wild almond bushes; these oaks are much smaller than our European oak trees, and their leaves are of a different shape and colour; the big acorns are edible. They are used for making a sort of brown bread, which is not at all bad in taste.

In riding through the woodland we met a tribe of Turkish-speaking nomads who were seeking their summer quarters in the cool mountain regions south of Shiraz. Nothing can be more picturesque than the moving of a tribe with all its belongings across wooded hills. Every mule or donkey, and even cows and oxen, were made to carry some of the goods—implements used for camping, tenting made of black wool, long

irregular poles, copper kettles, sacks of grain, and so on. One would see a cow or a donkey loaded with a double carpet-bag, one side containing two small children and the other three live lambs, a cock tied by one leg being in the middle. The men would mostly walk with their long flint-lock muskets flung over their shoulders, followed by their fine greyhounds and by very fierce watch-dogs. The women would bestride the beautiful mares of the tribe, decked with saddlery of the finest carpet work. They would ride, as all nomads do when not in action, without the severe curb used in the East. The well-trained mares obeyed their riders' commands instantly, and allowed them to spin fine wool, which was to be used to make those beautiful rugs we so much admire. Boys and young men roamed through the trees outside the track to collect the plants which give the exquisite unfading colours to the rugs, or would keep the foals together by shouts and an occasional thrown stone. It is much to be regretted that aniline dyes have to a great extent replaced the original vegetable dyes which made the beauty of Persian rugs famous in all countries. But the representatives of the countries which produce aniline dyes were charged to oppose any restriction laid upon their introduction. The Persians themselves have in a high degree lost the good taste for old carpets.

It is a peculiarity of all Persians never to show surprise nor admire anything. When I asked an old man the meaning of poles and wire along our common track, he said: 'This is the telegraph. I suppose you have nothing of the kind in your country. It serves to transmit messages from one place to another, be they ever so distant. I verified this myself when, at Shiraz, I sent a message to my brother at Isfahan and received a reply which only he could have given.'

'Is this not very wonderful?' I asked.

'Not so very,' was the reply; 'imagine a very long

greyhound whom you pinch at the tail and who howls at the head.'

Wherever there was a station of the Indo-European telegraph line we were hospitably received by the officials, some English and some Armenian.

We left the nomads, who sought the deserted parts of the hills with their untouched pasture-grounds, and continued our way towards Shiraz. The last two nights spent on the stone floors of caravanserais were bitterly cold. At length we descended from the wooded hills into the plain and reached Shiraz early on the eighth day of our caravan journey. The mules had suffered much from lack of water and fodder on the way; in one locality there had been only a cistern full of rain-water, which was parsimoniously dealt out to travellers. We feared the elephant, if he followed the same route, would empty this cistern in one draught, leaving the inhabitants without water for the long rainless summer.

We were hospitably received by Mr. Preece, the head of the important Shiraz telegraph station, in his comfortable house situated in the midst of the famous rose gardens of that city. No one could have given us more valuable information and advice than Mr. Preece, nor could anybody have been in a better position for introducing us to the authorities of the capital of Southern Persia, for he was held in high esteem by every one and enjoyed the position, if not the actual appointment, of an official British agent.

In one thing, however, I did not follow his directions. He had warned me not to go to the city alone, as I might have difficulties with fanatic inhabitants, or be unduly swindled in the bazaars. I could not resist the temptation of visiting the celebrated old town at once, nor of roaming about its bazaars unattended. I met with no difficulty of any kind, and returned with an ass-load of carpet-bags, rugs and curios which I had bought, as Mr. Preece afterwards admitted, at their market price.

Most of these I sent to Europe along with my Colt repeating carbine. This I did not like to take with me as originally planned, as Mr. Preece had laughed at me for going about armed in Persia, which was then safer than any place in Europe. I only kept a pair of carpet-bags for use on my further journey. These carpet-bags were of the same workmanship as the finest Shiraz rugs, and proved as useful as they were agreeable to behold on the further trip across Persia, as well as on many other similar journeys. Notwithstanding the exposure to rain, snow, the fording of rivers and the scorching rays of the sun in long wanderings through Persia, Syria, Palestine, Arabia, Abyssinia and Morocco, they still retain their fine well-blended colours. Among the sundry articles that took my fancy in the bazaars there was a small, but very pretty, tablecloth of hand-painted cotton, meant to be spread on the ground by travellers when picnicking by the roadside: it bore an inscription which I recognized as a verse of Saadi:

'The surface of the earth is His common tablecloth,
In spreading it for the use of every one He makes no distinction between friend and foe.'

Shiraz had often been destroyed by wars and by earthquakes. It was built up in its present design by one of the best and wisest men who ever ruled over Persia, Karīm Khān. This man, a member of the nomad tribe of Zand, a branch of the Lurrs, had gradually brought almost the whole of Persia under his sway after his master, the great conqueror Nādir Shah, had been murdered in 1747. He never adopted the title Shah, but called himself 'Vakīl',—Lieutenant,—namely, of the twelve Imams, the most revered saints of the Persians. His modesty is shown by an anecdote which I found in a manuscript history of his dynasty. One day the Court historiographer had composed a history in which he led back Karīm Khān's ancestry to the Pīsh-

dādiān, or Achaemenidae, the most ancient ruling house of Persia. When this book was read to him Karīm Khān interrupted the reader, saying: 'My forefathers, Inak and Būdak, lived by stealing donkeys on the caravan tracks; where do the Pīshdādiān come in?' He then ordered the ink to be washed off the manuscript and made the unfortunate writer drink it. It is said that when Karīm Khān built up the city he sent for musicians to play and sing to the builders so that they should do their work in a cheerful spirit; but it may be that this story was invented to explain the beautiful finish of most of Karīm Khān's buildings, especially the Bāzār-i Vakīl, which is the finest in Persia.

Mr. Preece made arrangements for us to be received by the Governor of Shiraz, the Sāhib Dīvān, and by a young Prince attached to him, whose title was Jalāl ad Douleh—Splendour of the State. The Governor was a fine, clever-looking old gentleman with exquisite manners. The same could not be said of the Splendour of the State, who continued whispering and giggling with his companions during our reception. Mr. Preece, when he heard of this, remonstrated with the Sāhib Dīvān and requested him to look after the behaviour of the young Prince. Many years later, when I was German Minister at Bukarest, one of the boon companions of the Splendour of the State was my Persian colleague. He remembered the incident, and told me that the Prince had been severely reprimanded by the Governor.

The last day of our stay in Shiraz was the most interesting one for me. I visited the tombs of two of the greatest of Persian poets, *Saadi* and *Hafiz*. Part of Saadi's 'Rose-Garden' I had read with my father in Germany when I was a student. I had read more of Saadi's works in India, and by this time knew many of his verses by heart. Saadi is undoubtedly the most popular poet of the Near and Middle East. His sayings are on every Persian's lips, be he a learned man or a

mule-driver. I have heard him quoted by Turks, Indians and Arabs. Hafiz is hardly less known all over the western part of Asia, though not quite as popular on account of the more complex meaning of his verses. But I had heard one of his odes sung by Indian dancing-girls in a boat on the Ganges. Now I was to see the places where these great poets were buried. While I was reading the ode which Karīm Khān had engraved on the alabaster slab covering the tomb of Hafiz, a dervish approached and handed me a small branch with a few bitter oranges on it, quoting one of Hafiz' verses where he says: 'After my death my tomb will be the meeting-place of all the revellers of the earth.' The term 'revellers' can also mean something like enthusiasts. When, shortly after, I was standing at the head of the sarcophagus of Saadi, another religious mendicant came up to me, and after a long silence asked me: 'I suppose you have come here as a sight-seer?' When I replied: 'No, rather as a pilgrim,' he handed me his beautifully carved beggar's bowl, and bade me take it to my country as a souvenir of Saadi's resting-place. He refused to be paid in any shape for his fine bowl, which was of some value, and, when pressed, asked me to give him the bitter oranges I had in my hand. I still possess the bowl, which is most delicately ornamented with Persian inscriptions (*see* illustration).

Not all religious mendicants in Persia and India are of the type I met near Shiraz. Most are quite materialistic. They frequently carry a club or an iron mace, not only as an emblem of their order, but also occasionally to stimulate charity, as an Indian writer justly terms it.

I have often been questioned about the rose-gardens of Shiraz, among which lie the tombs of the poets who have made them famous by their songs. Readers must remember that the great and ever-changing variety of roses we admire in our gardens is a recent creation, and that most of them were unknown a hundred years

BEGGAR'S BOWL

(*See p.* 56)

ago. The roses of Shiraz are the old-fashioned light pink *Rosa centifolia*, the 'hundred-leaved' fragrant variety. Their scent is finer than their appearance: their petals are used to make '*atr* (otto!) of roses as well as rose-water. Whoever seeks the Roses of Shiraz in Persian poetry will not be disappointed.

In the evening of that day we were invited to dinner by the Navab (great nobleman) Haidar Ali Khan, one of the wealthiest and most cultured citizens of Shiraz. As we walked with Mr. Preece from his house to the inner town, large lanterns were carried by his servants to light the way. This was quite necessary, as there were pits, ditches and other man-traps to be avoided. These lanterns are in construction like the Chinese lanterns used in Western countries, only much larger. The top and the bottom discs were made of ornamented copper, while their 'shirts', as the Persians call them, are made of glazed linen instead of paper.

In the Navab's house we tasted for the first time a true Persian dinner. I may say that this was a delicious meal, because M. d'Orval, who was a greater authority on culinary art than I, declared it to be 'à la hauteur des meilleurs dîners de Paris'.

After dinner, as we sat drawing the perfumes of fragrant Shiraz tobacco from the Navab's silver-bowled, gold-mounted hubble-bubbles, some musicians appeared, among them a blind minstrel who sang the songs of Hafiz and other poets in a high voice, according to the best musical traditions. The Persian way of singing seems to be an imitation of the passionate song of the nightingale that rings through all Persian gardens in the spring season. I have known several members of the Navab family well, and appreciated their knowledge of Persia and Europe as much as I have enjoyed their ever-pleasant company.

The dinner at the Navab's was the last evening spent at Shiraz. The next morning saw us in the saddle at

an early hour, for we had the first long day of our 'chapar' ride before us. All we had done up to then was caravan travelling, i.e. using the same animals day after day. From Shiraz onward we used *chapar*, or post horses, which were changed at every station. This institution, which was the quickest mode of locomotion before motors had been introduced, was instituted by Darius I, about 500 B.C. Those who travel by *chapar* are supposed to take no more impedimenta with them than can be stowed away in their saddle-bags. We were, however, obliged to take a pack-horse with us, which we drove loose along the track, the postboy riding ahead without troubling about what passed behind him. The average length of a stage is about five to seven parasangs, one parasang being about six kilometres, or a little over four miles. Travellers anxious to go quickly must have no mercy on the unfortunate animals of the postal service. However, Persian postmasters have devised different ways of slackening the speed of men who prove particularly hard on their mounts. One of these is to invite the traveller to a bowl of 'māst', a sort of junket, which, if sufficiently sour, will oblige the rider to dismount every quarter of an hour, and eventually bring in the horse in perfect condition! There are many records of people having ridden from one town to another in an incredibly short space of time. I believe all these records, but I never witnessed them. We used to do about three stages a day, i.e. a distance of 100 to 120 kilometres. Our longest ride was 300 kilometres within two days, but on this occasion we were handicapped by twice having to take tired horses over a new stage.

On our second *chapar* day we twice went off the track for some distance, to see the ruins of Persepolis and the rock sculptures of Naksh-i Rustam. These grand remains of Persian antiquity have been so often and so ably described that I need not here expatiate on

them. I refer my readers to Curzon's detailed and accurate account in his *Persia* and, for the reproduction of photographs, to my book *Persien in Wort und Bild.* It is not to the honour of Western civilization that the beautiful palaces and temples of Persepolis were wantonly burnt by Alexander the Great. Earthquakes, the fanaticism of Muhammedan zealots, and time have done much to continue the destructive work of the Macedonian soldiery, yet the remaining columns, portals and sculptured walls scattered over the magnificent elevated terrace of what the Persians now call 'The Throne of Jamshīd', with the tombs of Achaemenian Kings hewn in the rock behind them, are imposing still. Among the inscriptions travellers have engraved on the ruins there is a verse of Omar Khayyám's, which is known to the English-speaking world in FitzGerald's poetical but very free rendering:

'They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshýd gloried and drank deep:
And Bahrám, that great Hunter—the Wild Ass
Stamps o'er his Head, but cannot break his sleep.'

The literal translation of this verse is:

'In yonder castle where Bahrám grasped the goblet,
The gazelle bears her young and the lion seeks his resting-place.
Bahrám, who didst catch the gūr (wild ass) all your lifetime
See'st thou how now the gūr (grave) has caught Bahrám.'

The tomb of Darius I, the greatest of all rulers of Persia, is not at Persepolis, but is hewn into the perpendicular rock of Naksh-i Rustam, which we visited on the same day.

We arrived late in the afternoon at the village of Sivand, where an English telegraph clerk and his young English wife were awaiting us with a most welcome meal and unlimited quantities of the strong Sivand wine. On our second day we passed the less extensive ruins of Istakhr, of which the well-preserved tomb of Cyrus is

the most interesting feature. Unlike the tombs of his successors which are hewn in the side of a rocky hill, it is a small building roofed like a Greek temple, standing at the top of high steps. It is now looked upon as a sanctuary and called the Tomb of the Mother of Solomon. I entered it and found spanned across the inner chamber a rope hung with all sorts of trinkets or amulets which were intended to remind the saint to plead for the fulfilment of the wishes of those who visited the shrine. These are chiefly women wishing for offspring.

Many other curious and interesting places did we see on our journey up country, but I will not pause here to describe them. We had generally little time to spend at the smaller stations, as we were hurried on by frequent messages from the English Chargé d'Affaires, Sir Arthur Nicolson, with whom I was to stay in Teheran. He wished us to be there before the beginning of the summer exodus and the dispersal of the diplomatic corps, which would follow the Persian New Year Festival, the 21st of March. We practically rode without stopping for rest, or for more than a meal of bread and cheese or the inevitable junket. Only once we gave way to our craving for a warm repast. We reached a nice clean station-house kept by an elderly couple who had a manner that inspired confidence, and instead of pushing on another stage, we asked our host to prepare us a dinner consisting of chicken and rice. As it was more than two hours before sunset, we judged that our meal would be ready before dusk, but our calculations proved wrong. The chasing of the unfortunate chickens took a good hour and dressing them lasted still longer, so that at length we retired to sleep. Each of our beds consisted of two cotton bags, a big one and a small one. At each station these bags were filled with chopped straw, thus making a comfortable mattress and pillow. In the morning the bags were emptied and packed again

TOMB OF CYRUS

RUINS OF PERSEPOLIS

in our wallets. We seemed to have slept many hours when we were forcibly wakened by our host, the post-master, who placed an enormous dish of rice with boiled chicken on it before us. We were now disinclined to partake of this luxury, but upon tasting it our appetite returned, and we enjoyed our midnight meal. But we never repeated the experiment. We pushed on day by day from early dawn to dusk to end our journey.

CHAPTER III

ISFAHAN—VISIT TO THE SHAH'S ELDEST SON—THE BEAUTIFUL DANCING-GIRLS OF KASHAN—THE VALLEY OF THE ANGEL OF DEATH—ARRIVAL AT TEHERAN

THE first sight I caught of Isfahan was the fulfilment of a dream of my youth. When at school my thoughts would often wander back to the romantic and fascinating sights of Palestine, and I would picture myself riding across a ridge from the top of which I suddenly saw beneath me the domes and minarets of a big Eastern city. Such a surprising panorama presents itself to the traveller coming from the south when he approaches Isfahan. Suddenly he sees the ancient city with its tiled domes and towers, its long avenues of plane trees, its river and its bridges, its wide square surrounded by mosques and palaces stretched out at his feet. Our immediate aim, however, was not the inner town but the Armenian suburb of Julfa, where we were to enjoy the hospitality of Dr. Hoernle, a German physician in the service of an English or American mission society. Here I was also earnestly warned not to go into the city unattended, just as I had been at Shiraz. But I slunk away one morning before breakfast and wandered about the town for many hours. I was not, of course, molested by anyone, but was treated with the greatest courtesy. One of the shopkeepers offered me tea, very good bread and halwā, notwithstanding the small sum I spent on his ware. I talked with several people, and found many of them cultured and witty. When I passed out of the vaulted bazaars into the big open square, which

YEZD-I-KHAST, THE "ROCK-BUILT CITY" IN CENTRAL PERSIA

is surrounded by some of the principal buildings, such as the Madrasa or High School and the Sublime Porte, the palace of the former Kings, I noticed a small crowd standing in front of a high beautifully-tiled gate, and looking at something that was suspended over its arch. In reply to my inquiry one of the bystanders said: 'These are the heads of twenty-two Kurdish highway robbers who had waylaid the pilgrims going to the Sacred Shrines of Mesopotamia. They used to cut off the heads of the men and the breasts of the women until they were at last overpowered by the Shah's troops, and had their heads cut off. These heads, dried and stuffed with straw, were sent to the Governor of Isfahan, who had them suspended here. Pray tell me, is there also in your countries such a good government who sees that robbers and thieves are duly punished?'[1] The story of these Kurds whose heads I now saw will be told in a further chapter, when I give an account of another journey during which I visited their graves.

Isfahan was for a long time the capital of Persia under the rule of the Safavi Dynasty. It had been elected as such, and embellished with many fine buildings by the greatest ruler of the Safaveans, Shah Abbas I, a contemporary of Queen Elizabeth of England. In the days of its prosperity the town is said to have had 600,000 inhabitants. At that time it was considered one of the wonders of the world. Its praise was sung by poets in what may seem an exaggerated manner: I give here an abridged extract of one of their panegyrics:

'On account of the great extent of this capital
The sun rises in one part of it
While in another dark night prevails.
The rose of reason blossoms in it without thorns,
Genius is as common there as grass in the fields.
At the threshold of this world of wisdom

[1] I should perhaps be somewhat embarrassed if this question were put to me now.

Greece stands as a beggar.
In every one of its streets there stands an Aristotle
And at every step you come upon a Plato.
The populace of Isfahan produces works like the Syntaxis Megiste (of Ptolemy)
Its children shake books like (Avicennas) Encyclopædia out of their sleeves.'

In 1723 this great city was besieged and ultimately conquered by a host of Afghans much inferior in knowledge and in armament to their Persian opponents. The town was sacked, the Shah and almost all members of the Royal family lost their lives, the whole of Persia fell under Afghan sway and Isfahan was reduced to the rank of a provincial town of secondary importance. When I saw it, most of the fine old buildings were more or less in a state of dilapidation, the beautifully coloured old tiles falling one by one off the domes and walls.

The Governor of Isfahan at that time was the second son of Nāsiraddīn, the ruling Shah. His title was Zill as Sultān,—Shadow of the Sultan. The 'Splendour of the State' whom we had met at Shiraz was his eldest son. Zill as Sultān had gradually acquired the governorships of most of the southern provinces and thus had become practically the ruler of more than one-third of Persia. He had brought together a considerable army, which, compared to the one the Shah, his father, could muster, was well equipped and drilled. He was unscrupulous and, if necessary, cruel when he saw an opportunity of extorting money. He often said the stupidest people were those of Isfahan, because when asked whether they preferred paying a large sum or undergoing bastinado on the soles of their feet, they invariably chose the latter, though they would ultimately pay the money to put an end to their torture.

We visited the Zill as Sultān in his camp on the banks of the Zindarūd, which, dammed up as it was, gave the impression of a great river. Conversation with him was pleasant and interesting. He used every

opportunity to gather information about Europe, India and other parts of the world, and seemed to be very intelligent. We also made the acquaintance of his generalissimo, Sārem ad Daula, the 'Scimitar of the State', who was the organizer and commander of the Zill's army, and his right hand in all Government affairs. It was evident that any day the Zill as Sultān might march to Teheran, and defeat and capture the Shah, his father, and that neither a sense of duty nor filial respect would hold him back. The Russians believed him to be a tool in the hands of British diplomacy, and thought that England contemplated using him as an instrument for extending her dominion over the Persian Empire.

Some years later the Zill as Sultān paid a state visit to the Shah. He occupied his fine and sumptuous palace in Teheran, where he received all those who came to pay their respects to him. I was also one of the callers and found him in excellent spirits. Apparently the many difficult questions to be settled between him and his Imperial father were being solved smoothly by means of the big sums he was prepared to sacrifice on this occasion. When he wanted to return to Isfahan, the Shah and the Grand Vizier pressed him to stay and share in grand festivities prepared in his honour. At last, however, the Zill as Sultān became suspicious and declared to the Grand Vizier that he would not remain in Teheran any longer. 'But if it is the Shah's wish——' 'The Shah has nothing to say in the matter. I need not obey his orders if it does not suit me to do so. I need but wire to the Sārem ad Daula, my General, and he will march on Teheran with my superior forces, which are, as you know, armed with modern artillery.' 'Do as your Imperial Highness deems good,' retorted the Grand Vizier, 'only let me tell you that your modern artillery arrived in Teheran last night, and that your General, the Scimitar of the State, is dead.' On hearing of his General's death the Prince only said: 'Chashm-am

kūr shud,'—I have lost my eyesight,—and submitted to the loss of his vast provinces, glad to be left Governor of the town of Isfahan and its immediate surroundings.

During our stay at Julfa, the Armenian suburb of Isfahan, the fiftieth anniversary of Queen Victoria's reign was celebrated there by the small community of British protected subjects. The British agent, Mr. Aganur, an Armenian, gave a dinner to which my friend, Monsieur d'Orval, and I, as well as a Russian Cossack officer of German extraction, von Blumer, were invited. This dinner, at which England, Germany, France and Russia were represented, was chiefly attended by Armenians and their ladies. This was quite a novelty to us. The Armenian ladies proved agreeable and pleasant company and were appreciated by us not only on account of their scarcity value.

On continuing our journey northwards we had to make up for the time spent at Isfahan. The country before us was the highest we had as yet ridden over. Although we were now in May, the nights were exceedingly cold. On the 9th of May we rode up to the top of the Kuhrūd Pass, about 900 feet high: from here we were surprised suddenly to see before us Northern Persia up to the mountains that border the Caspian Sea, while we were still in Central Persia. Before us in the distance, but very distinctly visible, lay the long snow-clad chain of the Alburz Mountains, overtopped by the snowy peak of Damavand. At first I could hardly believe the postboy when he told me that those were the mountains, the other side of which was reflected in the Caspian Sea and could be seen from Southern Russia. As we walked down the Pass, we came upon much snow, and took a childish pleasure in pelting one another with snowballs. The plain extending in front of us was much more elevated than that of Isfahan. Near its end we could discern the town of Kashan, which we were to reach before nightfall.

Our horses went fast without being driven in the brisk air, and we rode through the gate of the town more than two hours before sunset. In the bazaars I saw a bookshop, and stopped to see whether there were any old manuscripts worth buying. Monsieur d'Orval, however, had a special reason for wanting to get into our quarters as soon as possible and begged me not to tarry. So I asked the bookseller to bring the books I had hastily selected to the telegraph station. Here we were received by the Armenian clerk in charge, and shown into the guests' room, a square apartment furnished with a mat and a leather water-jug. My companion's reason for so much haste was his desire to see a Persian dancing performance, for which, he had heard, Kashan was famous. All along the road he had entertained me about the wonders that awaited us.

'Vous savez on m'a dit que c'est quelquechose d'extraordinaire. Ce n'est pas seulement la beauté des danseuses mais surtout leur grâce et leurs allures qui sont bien autre chose que tout ce qu'on voit aux Indes. Il faut absolument voir ça. Allons, ne perdons pas de temps.'

We had hardly entered the house when my friend expressed his wishes to Mr. Agopian, the Armenian telegraph clerk, and asked him to send at once for the best dancing-girls. This was promised, but etiquette demanded that we should first refresh ourselves with a glass of Persian tea and a smoke from the hubble-bubble. This greatly increased M. d'Orval's impatience. In the meantime, the dealers in old books had arrived with their manuscripts, which were spread out on the mat on which we were sitting, and I at once became absorbed in examining them. I selected a fairly old copy of the Dīvān of Hafiz and a tattered, but apparently very old manuscript of the Dīvān of Shams-i Tabrīz. It contained the odes and quatrains of the great mystic Jelāl ad Dīn Rūmī (thirteenth century), the founder of the order of

the Mevlevi Dervishes, known to visitors to Constantinople as the 'Dancing Dervishes'. The poet had written these odes in the name of his spiritual guide, a mysterious person known under the title 'Shams-i Tabrīz', Sun of Tabrīz. This manuscript later on proved of the highest value to me on account of its antiquity. I discovered in it one of the quatrains attributed to Omar Khayyám, the true origin of which has not up to now been known to Orientalists. Readers interested in this matter will find a detailed account in my article on the origin of Omar Khayyám's quatrains in *Zeitschr. d. D. Morgenl. Ges.* 1926, V. 5.

Of course the bookseller and his associate had to be invited to partake of the tea. While I was discussing with them the price I was to pay for the manuscripts, another visitor appeared, a very portly, middle-sized Persian gentleman clad in long black clothes and wearing the black lambskin cap used by the upper classes. His fat face and his enormous double, or rather treble, chin showed a black grizzled beard of three or four days' growth. He entered, after having shed his shoes near the door, walking on to the mat in spotless white socks. He addressed us in fluent and elegant French which would have done honour to a member of the Paris Bar.

'Messieurs, j'ai l'honneur de vous saluer au nom de tout ce qui représente la civilisation et le progrès en Perse.'

He had studied every kind of science—et surtout les mœurs—in Paris, had had a brilliant career and until lately had been Governor of a Province of about the size of France. But such were the vicissitudes of life in Persia that, in the words of Saadi, he who sat proudly in the saddle one day might have to carry the saddle on his own back the next. He was now reduced to occupying the modest office of postmaster of Kashan, deprived of rank and riches, and—a thing he felt much more—

of almost all connection with the 'civilized world'. On hearing that two European travellers had arrived, one of whom was a Frenchman, he had come to spend a few hours in more congenial company than poor forlorn Kashan could offer him.

At the first pause in this eloquently delivered address, M. d'Orval put in his supplication for the speedy appearance of the dancing-girls of whom he had heard such wonders. The postmaster corroborated his high opinion of the art of Terpsichore as practised in Kashan, and said nothing would be easier than to arrange a dancing performance. 'But,' he added, 'experience has taught me that as long as there is one person present whose thoughts are bent on gain, no real enjoyment can be expected. I beg you, therefore,' turning to me, 'dismiss these dealers. Give them whatever they may demand and let them go.' I complied with his request and paid the booksellers for the two manuscripts, giving up my wish to look through the rest of their treasures, although there might have been books of priceless value among them.

'I beseech you in the name of your love of France,' said M. d'Orval, as soon as they had left, 'bestir yourself! Have the dancing-girls brought here at once.'

'With the greatest pleasure,' was the answer, 'but allow me to put one preliminary question. Have you any wine or cognac with you?'

Now we had brought only one bottle of cognac with us, not being able to carry more in our wallets; of this my travelling companion had consumed his share. He had pleaded that I should cede him the other half 'dans l'intérêt commun', because otherwise he would, in all likelihood, not be able to endure the strain of almost uninterrupted fast riding, whereas I appeared to be able to go on without alcohol. I had up to that day refused to comply with this desire, wishing to keep the precious liquor in case of illness. But now, when he

appealed to my love of art, I handed him the bottle. The postmaster, rather disappointed that it was not full, produced a small, flat, brass Persian mug, which he filled and drank, and continued to re-fill until the bottle was empty. Then a lengthy argument ensued because the postmaster would not believe that two such distinguished travellers could possibly carry such small provision of drink. His original amiability was clouded by suspicion, alternating with regret. He showed his disappointment in us, if not disgust, and finally declared that now night had fallen, it was too late to send for dancers and musicians in a town whose inhabitants were accustomed to go to bed immediately after sunset. It was now M. d'Orval's turn to show disappointment and anger. But the postmaster kept his temper, and assured him that nothing was more contrary to his ideas and his breeding than to cause the displeasure of a foreign guest, especially a Frenchman. After all, the loss was not so great. What had not been possible to-day might be arranged to-morrow. Would we not stay a little longer at Kashan? This, of course, was out of the question, as the telegraph clerk had just transmitted a message from Sir Arthur Nicolson to us urging us to hasten our journey, so that we should be in Teheran the day after to-morrow.

'Then,' said he, 'there remains only one thing to do. I myself, yes I, the postmaster of Kashan, will produce a Persian dance for your benefit. Don't imagine that my bulky figure debars me from gracefulness. Remember that even the elephant is capable of delicate and elegant movements. To a true connoisseur, the dancing of a cultured and refined gentleman is preferable to the antics of ignorant and low-bred dancing-girls.'

Being by this time rather sleepy, I was at the point of seizing the postmaster by his collar and ejecting him out of the telegraph station when M. d'Orval interposed that although nothing, of course, could replace the dancing-girls, it might be fun to see the fat postmaster

dance. So peace was restored, and the postmaster was to give us a performance. But he hesitated, pleading shyness.

'You will understand,' he said, 'that a dignitary of my age, rank and antecedents, cannot suddenly hop about before strangers. This can only be done if the necessary "hālat" '—atmosphere (German, 'Stimmung')—'is attained. But how can this be produced by only half a bottle of cognac? Perhaps our host, being a Christian, will bring some more drink from his well-filled cellar?'

Mr. Agopian probably had good reason not to betray his treasures, but after much coaxing he set on the mat a not quite full bottle of Persian arac, a very strong liquor made out of the dregs of grapes. This was soon disposed of in the same way as the cognac, and with no more effect!

'You must admit yourselves,' the postmaster said, after quaffing the last mugful, 'that I am about as sober as when I had the honour of making your acquaintance. It is really not my fault if I cannot dance for you. I have tried my best. Bonsoir, messieurs, my best wishes follow you on your further journey.'

Thus ended the episode of the beautiful dancing-girls of Kashan.

The next two days' ride was the longest and the hottest of the whole journey, but by this time we were so well in training that I, for my part, felt hardly any fatigue. We rode through the narrow streets and dark vaulted bazaars of Kum at night-time, only resting at the *chapar* station to change horses, and to eat a little bread and cheese. M. d'Orval was longing to indulge in a bottle of wine now the cognac was gone. Unfortunately, he knew the Persian word for wine and, by shouting 'Sharāb' to the astonished stablemen, produced the impression of a dissolute character who wanted to organize an orgy in the sacred city. For

Kum is the burial-place of Hazrat-i Masuma and of many descendants of the Prophet, including the kings of the Safavi Dynasty. The golden dome that crowned the principal sanctuary was all we could distinctly see in the moonlight. When the sun rose we were crossing the western extremity of the great Salt Desert of Central Persia. In passing this way six years later I had to take a different route, a big salt lake having formed in the interval, which covered the old road and made the caravanserais which had served travellers for centuries useless. For many hours we rode through the 'Valley of the Angel of Death', a tract of country that really deserves its name. It was getting dark, and our horses were beginning to drag themselves along with difficulty, when the barking of dogs, and soon after the croaking of frogs, told us that we were approaching cultivated land and human habitations. We slept in the caravanserai of Rubāt Karīm, and rose early so as to be in Teheran before lunch-time.

This would have been easy if we had had good horses, but the wretched animals we were given had evidently had no proper food, and my horse refused to go on after we had covered not more than a couple of miles. There was nothing left for me but to walk the five parasangs —thirty kilometres—to the capital. I was grateful that my horse jogged along without its rider, otherwise I would have had to carry my saddle with its wallets on my own shoulders. When, at length, I entered the gate of the British Legation it was just striking one. In less than half an hour, after a quick bath and change of clothes, I sat at the lunch-table, welcomed by Sir Arthur and Lady Nicolson, and the other members of the Legation.

CHAPTER IV

Sir Arthur and Lady Nicolson's Hospitality —Baron Schenck, the German Minister, and other Members of the Diplomatic Corps—General Schindler—Audience with the Shah

IN writing of people whose country has been at war with mine, and who themselves may have developed hostile feelings against Germany, I am not going to allow myself to be influenced by events posterior to the time I am speaking of. I try to relate what I remember without bias and without prejudice. As regards the future I still entertain the idea of improved relations between Germany and England, convinced, as I have always been, that these two nations are destined to be on friendly terms. But I by no means entertain the Utopian idea of seeing this aim reached in my lifetime. Nor do I plead for friendship of the kind that existed formerly. It will take a long time before such relations can be restored. But I wish to say nothing in this volume which might contribute to estrange two nations whom common interest—if nothing more—will in the end oblige to stand side by side.

Sir Arthur Nicolson, then my host, was at a later period prominent among the adversaries of Germany. (See his Minutes in Vol. XI of British Documents.) But at the time of my visit to Teheran, in the spring of 1887, there was no idea of an Anglo-German misunderstanding. The relations between the two countries and the two reigning families appeared to be normal, if not friendly. In the autumn of that same year, Bismarck wrote to

Lord Salisbury proposing an Anglo-German entente; but although Bismarck's letter remained unanswered on the British Prime Minister's desk, no ill feeling was allowed to spring up between the two nations, because in the days of 'secret diplomacy' the two statesmen were not forced to divulge their correspondence by giving it to the Press.

Sir Arthur Nicolson proved a most charming host, and did everything he could to make my stay in Teheran an agreeable one. I had many long conversations with him, and he gave me the impression of a man of superior qualities coupled with great personal charm. Lady Nicolson, the young mother of three fine little boys, was the sister of Lady Dufferin, wife of the Viceroy of India. The youngest of those boys, Harold Nicolson, was at that time an infant. He afterwards entered the diplomatic service and was lately Counsellor of the British Embassy in Berlin. He was at the same time a writer of much talent. He left the service in 1929 to become a journalist. The Dufferins, when I told them of my plan to go home via Persia, had at once written to the Nicolsons, who kindly invited me by telegram to stay with them. Lady Nicolson had been at Girton, and had enjoyed a higher education than was usual for women in those days. I at once felt very much at home in their house, and enjoyed every hour of my stay with them.

The British Legation was situated in a large and beautiful garden, or rather park, with high shady trees and with shrubs all in bloom. Clear streams, conducted from the mountains, gave the garden freshness. The singing of nightingales and other birds contributed to give me the impression of Paradise after the long rides across the Salt Desert and the Valley of the Angel of Death.

The only thing that troubled me at first was that the German Minister might possibly feel a little offended that I stayed with the English Chargé d'Affaires instead

of with him. But Sir Arthur had arranged this matter with Baron Schenck, whom, of course, I at once visited. He was rather pleased than otherwise that I was staying at the Nicolson's, with whom he was on very friendly terms. M. d'Orval was the guest of the French Minister, Monsieur de Balloy. I made his acquaintance very soon, as well as that of the other foreign representatives at the Shah's court. Amongst these was the Russian Minister, Prince Dolgoruki, a man of very agreeable manner and appearance. He spoke German without the slightest foreign accent. I also met the Russian First Secretary, de Giers, who was later on my colleague at Bukarest. I have always been on very friendly terms with him, and liked him very much. He was Russian Ambassador in Rome when Bolshevism put an end to his career. I heard with much regret of his troubles when he and his wife were reduced to earning their living by giving lessons in the town where they had occupied such a high position.

As a matter of routine, dinners and picnics were given in our honour by the different Legations, so that we soon became acquainted with the whole Diplomatic Corps.

Sir Arthur Nicolson suggested that M. d'Orval and I should ask for an audience with the Shah. This was granted on the application of our respective Ministers, and one morning we rode on horseback to the Palace, dressed in black frock-coats and top-hats, accompanied by mounted servants of our respective Legations. Sir Arthur Nicolson and the members of his staff had provided me with the necessary accoutrement for the occasion. When we dismounted at the Palace gate, we were led through several beautifully watered courtyards and gardens into a large room on the first floor, at the back of which, Nāsiraddīn Shāh, the King of Kings, the Shadow of God, the Ruler over whose head the Phœnix hovers, was standing. He wore a black uniform coat with about two dozen huge diamonds sewn on its front. On his black lambskin cap was a still larger flat

diamond known as the Daryā-i Nūr, the Sea of Light. It was one of the famous jewels of the Indian Emperors, and was brought to Persia by Nādir Shah when he conquered Delhi in 1740, together with the Kūh-i Nūr,—the Mountain of Light,—which now belongs to the British Crown. He was attended by a court dignitary who spoke very good French, and acted as interpreter. The Shah, having heard that I spoke Persian, addressed me in his own language. As my recent conversations had been chiefly with muleteers and shopkeepers, it was not so easy to comply with the exigencies of conventional court language. He asked me a good many questions about India and our journey which showed him to be very well informed and most intelligent. When M. d'Orval, on being asked which part of France was his home, answered: 'Between Paris and the Sea,' the Shah at once said: 'I suppose you mean Amiens or Abbeville,' which was quite right. We left the Shah, impressed with his dignity of manner and his general knowledge.

I saw a good deal of the German Minister, Baron Schenck zu Schweinsberg. He gave me the latest news of Europe, and sent me papers to read. On my long journey I had heard nothing of what was happening in the world. I was surprised to learn that we had just been on the verge of a war with France. The immediate cause of this menacing conflict had been a frontier incident provoked by some petty officials. But the real cause lay in the agitation for a war of revenge which was ever fostered by fanatical nationalists in France, and which often induced French ministers or generals to make bellicose speeches to satisfy or to captivate their constituencies. Bismarck's calm and firm hand had this time again hindered the outbreak of a war between Germany and France, in the course of which other European nations might have been drawn into the conflict.

After spending a very pleasant fortnight in Teheran, which included several excursions to the neighbouring

"DIAMOND GATE" OF THE ROYAL PALACE IN TEHERAN, NOW DISAPPEARED

Alburz Mountains, we continued our journey to the Caspian Sea. I took away with me a far more favourable impression of the Persian capital than I had later on, when I was obliged to live there for the better part of eight years.

The way that now lay before us was divided into two sections of about equal length. The first of these, from Teheran to Kazvīn, had been made sufficiently even to allow of carriage traffic. M. d'Orval chose this mode of locomotion, but I preferred the saddle to being jolted in a heavy Russian *tarantass*, or cart without springs and with no comfortable seat. I started in the afternoon from the English Legation, after having taken a hearty farewell of my kind hosts and other members of the Legation, who had all come out to see me canter away into the night on the road to Kazvīn, where I arrived early next morning. I put up at the hotel, an imposing building erected in the middle of the town by order of the Shah. Nāsiraddīn Shāh, after his first journey to Europe in 1873, had wished that his country should not be behindhand in accommodation for travellers. He had given instructions that this hotel should be provided with all the comforts travellers find in Europe. Accordingly, each room was furnished with a bed, with a mattress, a table, chairs, and wash-stand with its usual equipment, including a tooth-brush! This, he felt sure, would not fail to impress European visitors.

My travelling companion arrived several hours later, so that I had ample time to roam about the city and admire its beautiful old tiled mosques and gates as well as its interesting bazaars. We could only do one station that day, leaving the crossing of the Kharzān Pass for the early morning of the following day. Walking down this pass into the valley of the Shāhrūd River took us about six hours. When we arrived at Pāchinār, we met a young Frenchman who was going to Teheran as secretary to M. de Balloy. He warned us that we had three

steep mountains before us, of which he spoke with awe:

'Vous avez trois montagnes à pic à passer.'

These we never found, and were amused at the idea that the young explorer had at the same time to ascend the Kharzān Pass, a long day's march all uphill on a track flanked by many precipices. At Manjīl we found the bridge over the large and fast-flowing River Safīdrūd had been swept away, so that we had to cross the stream in improvised ferry-boats. Our horses, with their loads, had to be coaxed into stepping into these rickety rowing-boats, which would have been swept down by the violent current, had not a strong gale, which blows there every afternoon, counteracted the power of the water. Otherwise the Manjīl wind was very annoying, as it carried not only dust but gravel and pebbles with it, which blew into our faces. This short navigation, which only those can undertake who have strong confidence in Providence, besides being good swimmers, took considerable time, and it was dusk when we reached the western bank of the river. I have been told that sometimes it is possible to go down the rapids of the Safīdrūd on a raft. The English Consul at Rasht, Mr. Harry Churchill, when he took his bride, the daughter of a French doctor, from Teheran to her new home, had made arrangements for going down the river on a raft. Mrs. Churchill, not at all accustomed to riding, had become very tired and complained to her husband that she could not go on much further. But he reassured her: 'Keep up, darling, in less than half an hour we will be shooting the rapids.'

'I don't want to shoot rabbits,' was the reply; 'I am much too tired.'

It was getting dark when we rode through the bazaar of the picturesque village of Rūdbār. This place looked so inviting that we resolved to spend the night there. We were allowed to sleep on the roof of one of the shops, the keeper of which had given us supper. Rūdbār was

famous for its beautiful scenery, surrounded as it was by rocks and water, and groves of fruit trees. On the opposite bank one can see high up on the steep hills little villages with fine green pasture-ground, not unlike those in Switzerland. Rūdbār is perhaps the only place in Northern Persia where olives are extensively grown. Probably in all other regions the climate is either too dry or too damp for the olive tree.

But the finest scenery of our whole journey awaited us on the following day. The sparse cypress trees that dotted the rocky landscape gradually made way for a real virgin forest of great beauty. The principal trees of these woods, beeches and elms, made it look very much like some parts of Germany, only the growth was far more luxuriant there than in any part of Europe. A lovely scent permeated the air. The postboy told me that this came from the almost invisible blossoms of the wild vines which entwined the trunks of the high forest trees. The Caspian woods and those of the Caucasus are evidently the home of the grape. The legend according to which Bacchus had brought the vine from the Caucasus to Greece, has an historic basis. Two other creepers in these woods are jasmine and wild hops, the former of which mingles its sweet odour with that of the blossoming vines. On the roadside, many of the plants and flowers that bloom in Europe were to be seen, among them primroses, anemones and wild strawberries. I had heard much of the beauty of this scenery, but my expectations were surpassed by what I saw. Also, for the first time, I had the sensation of nearing home, except for the tigers which, I was told, one could often hear roaring on the other side of the river. Between the tops of the lofty trees the snow-clad summits of high mountains would appear at times, until our road gradually merged into the swampy strip of plain that borders the southern shore of the sea. Here one could see by the complexion of the inhabitants that this country is very unhealthy. The

peasantry chiefly cultivate rice. They live in wooden buildings, mostly thatched with reeds or the straw of the rice plant.

When we entered the picturesque town of Rasht we were met by a mounted servant of the Russian Consul, M. Vlassow, who invited us to stay with him, there being, at that time, no hotel at Rasht. Madame Vlassow had been the wife of the former English Consul. When her husband died she married the Russian Consul, thus staying in the same city and continuing to hold the same social position there.

On the following morning we had to ride to Piri Bazar, a dejected looking locality consisting of only one wooden building. This was at that time the harbour, the docks and the customs office of one of the principal ports of Persia. Here we embarked in a small sailing vessel that took us across to Anzali on the other side of the backwater of that name.

My first Persian journey ended here. It had been a long and sometimes wearisome ride from the Lagoon of Shif on the Persian Gulf to the Lagoon of Anzali on the Caspian Sea, but it had passed pleasantly and was the means of my seeing many interesting and beautiful places, and it had brought me into contact with a number of remarkable people. In looking from the deck of a Russian steamer on to the bright green land that stretched behind the breakers and on the lofty blue mountains with their snow-clad peaks in the background, I could not guess that a few years later I should return to spend eight years in Persia.

My sojourn of fifteen months in India, as well as my homeward journey across Persia and Russia, had widened my horizon and added a great deal to my knowledge of the world. I had become familiar with the Persian language to a degree that would have been impossible for me to attain by a merely theoretical study in Europe. My knowledge of Hindustani (Urdu) enabled me to read

without difficulty any books or newspapers issued by the vernacular Press in India. I published a Hindustani drama, *Indarsabhā*, the Court of Indra, which was being acted at that time in every Hindustani theatre of northern India every Saturday night. My edition contains, besides a literal German translation, a short history of the Hindustani dramatic literature, as well as biographical notes concerning the author of the play and a grammar of the Hindi dialect, in which some of its songs are written and sung. Notwithstanding its great popularity in India, this drama was quite unknown to European scholars like Sir Charles Lyall, who does not mention it in his excellent article on Urdu literature in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, as well as to teachers of Hindustani in England. Before publishing it I went to Oxford to ascertain whether this had not been done already, but the Professor of Hindustani, Colonel St. John, would hardly listen to what I had to say about it, but proved to me with many good arguments that a play of that kind could not possibly exist. I did not like to offend the kind old gentleman by producing the Hindustani copy of the *Indarsabhā* which I had in my pocket. What he said sufficed to show that it had not yet been translated nor commented upon in English.

I was also able to write a short colloquial grammar of modern Persian for the use of travellers in that country. This was the first book which took into account the language as it is now used in ordinary conversation and sometimes in diaries or in plays.

What was much more valuable and important for me than my acquaintance with Eastern languages and literatures was the insight into political affairs, which resulted from my journey. I had enjoyed the best opportunities of studying British rule over the vast Indian Empire and at the same time I had got into closer touch with the ideas of the natives of India than would have been possible without a certain linguistic proficiency. Notwithstand-

ing my great sympathy for the Indian people, I soon came to the conclusion that the great diversity of races and religions amongst them would not for a long time make it possible for them to govern themselves in a similar way to other commonwealths in whose population one element was predominant. But this was not a matter for me to judge.

The only question of importance for me was whether, as a German, I must wish for the continuance of British rule over India or not. Since German merchants enjoyed the same rights and the same facilities as the English in India and in her dependencies, there could be nothing better for Germany than to profit by this state of things. England stood for free trade, and the flourishing German commerce was at that time looked upon without concern.

In Persia I had seen enough of the methods of Tsarist Russia to convince me that an extension of Russian rule over parts of Asia meant the exclusion of German trade and enterprise from those countries, and I also convinced myself that Russia's friendship could not in the long run be hoped for unless Germany consented to be in all matters subservient to Russian plans of extension and predominance.

PART III

SYRIA

CHAPTER I

BISMARCK'S DISMISSAL—WITNESSING HIS DEPARTURE FROM BERLIN—COUNT CAPRIVI, HIS SUCCESSOR—CAIRO —BEYROUT—VISIT TO DAMASCUS

ON the 29th of March, 1890, I was walking to the Foreign Office to fetch my passport for my journey to Beyrout, where I had been appointed Vice-Consul, when I turned into the Wilhelmstrasse I was surprised to find large crowds almost blocking the street. At once I understood that they were waiting to see Bismarck's departure from the Reichskanzlei (Chancellery of the Empire) which adjoins the Foreign Office. Bismarck's formal dismissal had taken place on the 20th of March, but nine days elapsed before he left the capital. All the windows of the Foreign Office were open, as well as those of the other offices and private houses in the street. The officials of the Foreign Office were all at the windows to see the last of the great man who had been their much feared and yet adored chief. I stood on the steps of Wilhelmstrasse 75 and waited there until the open carriages came out of the courtyard of No. 77, and then passed slowly along the street in front of me. But the people closed in from both sides of the road, waving their hats and cheering and trying to stop the carriage in which the Prince was seated. They were taking a last look at the founder of the German Empire. Bismarck's

mighty head, with its white hair at the temples, his white moustache and white bushy eyebrows, enhanced the venerable appearance of the great old man. His eyes looked sternly at those who saluted him, while he responded by laying his hand on the brim of his military cap. His tall, straight figure, as he sat in the back seat next to the Princess, made him look like a giant leaving an age where giants were no more believed in. Everybody felt that a great epoch had come to an end, and that the future lay on Germany's horizon like a heavy black fog.

I did not, however, share the almost universal opinion that Bismarck ought to have been kept in office at any price, and that the change was unnecessary. He had been less successful in later years than in the earlier period of his leadership. In interior politics he had changed from Conservative to Liberal, from Liberal to Conservative, from Free Trader to Protectionist. In his struggle with the Church of Rome, the so-called *Kulturkampf*, after declaring '*nach Canossa gehn wir nicht!*'—we will not go to Canossa—he ultimately departed so much from his original standpoint that it looked very much as if he had 'gone to Canossa' after all.

At the same time, the foreign situation of Germany was not so brilliant as it was later on generally believed to have been when Bismarck had begun to grow into an almost mythical hero, who, by his mighty personality, would impose his will on the whole of Europe. This view does not correspond with the real situation. His power lay principally in the confidence he inspired in all countries that his policy aimed at the maintenance of peace, and would not give way to warlike tendencies even under strong provocation from without and heavy pressure from within. He would frequently say that Germany had much to lose and nothing to gain in a new war. The calamities of war, he would say, even if it were a successful war, would outweigh all possible advantages. Yet he

maintained Germany's position as a Great Power, showing that he would not shrink from drawing the sword if war seemed unavoidable. This determination to strike if necessary was perhaps more conducive to the preservation of peace than any pacifistic declaration might have been. Not only did he wish to keep the blessings of peace for Germany, which, after the Treaty of Frankfort in 1871, was satiated and did not desire the addition of an inch of European territory to its domains, but he also strove to prevent all wars between other Great Powers even where these did not seem directly to concern Germany. He even went so far as to bring about an agreement between England, Austria and Italy, in which Germany was not included, with a view to guaranteeing the *status quo* in the Mediterranean. Lord Salisbury, in making this Treaty known to Parliament, had used the words: 'I bring you tidings of great joy.'

By these and similar precautions Bismarck had, it is true, succeeded in preventing war between the Great Powers, in the first place between England and Russia; but no statesman, be he ever so great, can do away with the causes of international conflicts and thereby dispel the general danger of war. For this peril has its root often in the inner state of affairs of other countries and in the weakness of Governments who, for political or for personal reasons, allow a dangerous agitation to go on against a neighbouring country. Such agitations were the Pan-Slavist movement in Russia and the *Revanche* idea in France. It did not help Germany that Bismarck had allowed Russian aspirations to seek an outlet in a war against Turkey, nor that he gave France assurances of his peaceful and benevolent attitude which allowed her to make considerable colonial conquests, like that of Tunis, Indo-China, Madagascar, and others, and that he had gone so far as to recognize the predominant position of France among the Latin nations. Nothing approaching recognition had ensued in the countries thus

favoured by Bismarck; on the contrary, they held him responsible for what they had not attained. The Pan-Slavist aspirations, the susceptibility and ambitions of France remained unabated, and the hostility towards Germany had drawn those nations closer together, betraying even while Bismarck was still in office a tendency to unite in an alliance against her. And if this alliance were joined or merely favoured by any other Great Power, the very existence of Germany would be at stake. Bismarck's *cauchemar des coalitions* (nightmare of coalitions), was caused by Germany's real situation. In vain did the old statesman seek the security for Europe in an alliance, or in what was later called an *entente* with England. Lord Salisbury still adhered to the then prevailing idea that England must continue in her 'splendid isolation'. He explained that the rule of a democratic and parliamentary system made such commitments as Bismarck seemed to propose impossible for England.

Among the schemes that Bismarck had devised to assure peace to his country was the then so-called Reinsurance Treaty, which guaranteed peace with Russia against an Austrian aggression in a way similar to that by which Germany's alliance with Austria guaranteed that country against Russian aggression. This secret treaty had come to be looked upon by some of the leading men in Germany, at the head of them William II, as disloyal to Austria and was therefore not renewed by Bismarck's successor, Count Caprivi. Bismarck had been on the point of prolonging it at the time of his dismissal. When, later on, this fact was divulged by Bismarck, the non-renewal of the treaty was looked upon as the primary cause of all the political difficulties that beset Germany under William II, and that opinion prevails to this day. I cannot, however, bring myself to believe that it really made much difference. Relations with Russia had become so strained during the last years of Bismarck's

term of office that the renewed treaty would most likely have remained a dead letter in the event of warlike complications. The beginning of the Russo-German estrangement, moreover, lay much further back. It dated from the Berlin Congress (1878), when Gortchakoff attributed his failure to put his hand on Constantinople and the Straits to Bismarck's half-hearted assistance of Russian aspirations against England. But notwithstanding these considerations, I think it was a mistake of the German Government not to renew the treaty in some form or other.

The only two countries left on the side of Germany were her two allies, Austria-Hungary and Italy. Of these the former was weakened by internal quarrels, while there can never have been much illusion about the reliability of the latter.

I have given the above sketch of the European situation in 1890 in order to warn my readers against accepting without criticism the common view that Bismarck had left Germany at the apogee of power and security, and that this brilliant position was recklessly ruined by his successors. It is only after the publication of the German archives (*Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette*) that full light has been thrown on the situation; but, nevertheless, during the last years of Bismarck's leadership, many serious-minded men had the impression that a change was necessary. The subject on which Bismarck and the Emperor mainly disagreed was the labour question. It is well known that William II very soon after he had succeeded his father had taken the initiative in providing better conditions for labour. It was he who first started the idea of legislation with a view to improving the social conditions of the working classes. The young Emperor's enthusiasm met with scepticism and resistance on the part of the Chancellor, whose idea was to let matters go on until riots broke out: these he was determined to put down by military force in a way that

would make their repetition impossible for a long time. The Emperor, however, was not to be persuaded to begin his reign by shedding the blood of his subjects. This serious divergence in views on a matter of such weight made it almost impossible to expect the young monarch and the old statesman to pull in the same direction. Nothing short of the Emperor's definite renunciation of his humane ideas and acquiescence in the antiquated methods of brute force favoured by Bismarck would have satisfied the latter. The famous cartoon in *Punch*, 'Dropping the Pilot,' impressive as it was, did not do full justice to the difficulties to be faced in those days by the young Emperor. And it must not be forgotten that the Chancellor's age and ill-health would, in all probability, soon have terminated his public career, even if the crisis of March, 1890, had been overcome.

In the carriage following that of Prince Bismarck sat his son, Count Herbert Bismarck, who up to that date had been Foreign Secretary. The Emperor had tried in vain to keep him in his post. I had a personal reason for regretting his leaving the Foreign Office, because he was kindly disposed towards me, as he had also been to my father, whose services he appreciated and whom he wanted to see again in the diplomatic service.

It had been, of course, next to impossible to find a successor to Bismarck who had been simultaneously Chancellor of the German Empire and, as such, the head of all its departments, Home and Foreign, and Prime Minister of Prussia. The German Empire had no ministers besides the Chancellor. The Secretaries of State who managed the different departments were only secretaries to the Chancellor without parliamentary responsibility. Bismarck was, in fact, the Cabinet. Who was there fit to don the coat which the great man had cut for his own superhuman figure? This problem was all the more difficult to solve as Bismarck had not trained anyone to be his successor except his son Herbert. He

treated all the officials, high and low, as underlings who carried out his orders. Woe unto him who failed to interpret rightly the minutes he used to write in pencil on the papers laid before him. The culprit was liable to be summoned to Bismarck's room (perhaps to his bedroom, because after sleepless nights he used to rise late) and to be reprimanded in the most violent way. One of my colleagues, on such an occasion, was in danger of being attacked by Bismarck's huge mastiff, who sprang up to assist his master in what he thought was going to be a hand-to-hand fight. No wonder that independent judgment and personal initiative were hardly to be expected from the members of the Foreign Office who had advanced to the higher posts mostly by virtue of their obedience and submission.

When I heard that the Emperor had selected Count Caprivi, at that time Commander of the Tenth Army Corps (Hanover), to be the leading statesman, I did not share the widespread resentment at the Emperor's choice of a general. I had known Count Caprivi as my military chief, and had conceived the greatest admiration for him when, as a reserve officer in Hanover, I had had frequent opportunity to observe his methods. He had struck me as an unusually good military leader who, at the same time, was most humane towards his men and benevolent to the officers. On one occasion I had been the object of his solicitude, and had been surprised at the interest which, by his questions, he showed in me, a mere lieutenant of the reserve. Count Caprivi was, moreover, not a stranger to parliamentary work. He had been for some time Naval Secretary, and had proved a good parliamentary orator.

My position as Vice-Consul in Beyrout was much too modest for me to have thought of reporting myself to the new Chancellor, who must have been busy enough in those days. Later, I regretted my reserve, thinking that he might have liked to receive a young man who

had been under his orders in the army and was now serving under him in the Foreign Department. But, at that time, I merely hurried to get through my preparations for my new post, and started with my wife on the 14th of April via Vienna to Trieste, where we embarked in a steamer of the Austro-Hungarian Lloyd. Among the few passengers was a remarkable old gentleman, dressed in a strange ecclesiastical attire. He was the Patriarch of the Maronites of the Lebanon, Monsignore Dahdah. We soon became acquainted and were on very friendly terms before we landed. The Patriarch gave me much valuable information about Syrian affairs, besides sound advice for my Arabic studies. Later on in Beyrout we exchanged visits and further developed friendly relations.

From Trieste we sailed to Alexandria, where we disembarked, and spent a few days at Cairo. I had several times been in Egypt as a boy. Now I found a great change, principally brought about by the British occupation.

Our ship anchored earlier than we had expected outside the port of Beyrout on the morning of the 28th of April. My wife, looking out of her cabin window at the picturesque panorama, with the mountains of Lebanon covered with snow in the background, exclaimed: 'Whatever this place may be, I should like to live here.' This wish was fulfilled. After the usual loss of time in harbour that follows even the swiftest voyage, we were allowed to land. We had been greeted on board by the English physician, Dr. Brigstocke, to whom friends in England, among them Sir James Paget, had announced our arrival. His house was the centre of social life in Beyrout as far as the English-speaking residents were concerned. We spent many agreeable musical evenings there.

My chief, Consul-General Dr. Schroeder, had sent his first cavass to see to our landing and pass us unmolested

through the custom house. The cavass took us to a small but very comfortable boarding-house kept by an English lady. There we met other members of the Consular Corps, among them Colonel (afterwards Sir) Henry Trotter, the English Consul-General, with whom we soon made friends. There were, so to speak, two social circles in Beyrout, the English-speaking and the French-speaking. We frequented both, but our principal friends were among the former. The German colony in Beyrout was too small to form a separate social group. There were two schools, and a hospital kept by German deaconesses. These establishments were admirably conducted, and enjoyed the greatest popularity among rich and poor. There was a large French university, whose teachers were Jesuits, and an equally important Protestant College kept by Americans. We soon became friends of the Director of the American College, Dr. Bliss, and his family, as well as of the Professors, amongst whom we found some excellent scholars of Arabic, and several prominent physicians and surgeons. It would be difficult to give an adequate idea of the good work these people did among the population, and I must pay special tribute to the American women whom I saw at Beyrout and later on in Persia and Morocco, nursing the sick, assisting poor families and teaching them cleanliness and hygiene. All these ladies were first-rate housekeepers who knew how to manage even in very primitive places.

The Consul-General was a kind chief, and knew Syria better than almost any other foreign resident. He had an agreeable way of initiating me into my new duties, which were neither difficult nor unpleasant. He knew Turkish like his mother tongue, and also, of course, Arabic, but he preferred using the former, which was the language of the high officials in Beyrout. His only weakness was, as far as I could see, a tendency to lose his temper when he encountered too much of the systematic obstruction

and procrastination of which the Turks were past-masters. This, and his small figure and curly fair hair, caused his being nicknamed *kuchuk arslan*,—the Little Lion. He would sometimes give his opponents so much of his mind that he would be unable to continue discussing a case with them; on these occasions he would delegate me to settle the matter, a task which was not always easy.

But before I had time to settle down seriously to work, Dr. Schroeder advised me to take a week's leave to visit Damascus. He said he was sure that anyhow my wife and I would soon wish to see the famous old city, and it would be better if we did so before we started to find a house and furnish it. We accordingly took the *diligence* one early morning to drive across the Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon to the capital of Syria. The *diligence* was admirably worked by a French company. Sitting on the front bench of the high mail-coach next to the driver, we thoroughly enjoyed the long day's drive across the two mountain ranges. We broke our journey at Shtora, in the broad valley of the Bekaa, to visit the imposing ruins of Baalbek, a sight never to be forgotten.

On the *diligence* I had made the acquaintance of a young Syrian merchant, whom I afterwards met in Damascus. He introduced me to one of the leading citizens of that town, Sheikh Musallam al Amari, a descendant of the Caliph Omar. We sat together on the bank of the fast-flowing River Barada, quaffing Arabian coffee in small cups, and smoking the gurgling water-pipe. The Sheikh, aware of my interest in Arab life, invited his Beyrout friend and me to the Turkish bath, *hammām sūk al khayyātīn*, the finest in the city. This mode of invitation was customary among the Muhammedans of Damascus, as they could not ask male strangers to their houses on account of the women, who were hidden from them. This bath reminded me more than anything else of the stories of the Arabian Nights. We undressed in the raised recesses of the domed reception hall, in the

RUINS OF BAALBEK

From a Pencil Drawing

centre of which a fountain and large basin beautifully carved in *mizzi*—a kind of very hard reddish marble—was gushing forth its water. In a smaller apartment of white marble, with taps for hot and cold water, we were taken in hand by the skilful bath attendants, who subjected us to a severe but beneficial course of rubbing, soaping and massage, after nearly two hours of which we were told to step into a basin of cold water. Finally taken back again into the entrance hall under the dome, we were five times wrapped in sets of five towels interwoven with silk of different hues, and then left to rest and imbibe Turkish coffee and sherbet, smoking at the same time our hubble-bubbles. I wonder if any part of that fine old bathing establishment has survived the changes brought about by recent events?

We visited a number of private houses in Damascus, ancient and modern. These were all of exquisite style and of great beauty: their rooms mostly opened on to a courtyard with a delicately carved marble fountain in its centre. They were decorated in most beautiful taste, with Persian rugs and carpets, furniture inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl, hangings of Damascus silk displaying the most fascinating designs in various harmoniously blended colours; *objets d'art* from all parts of the East had accumulated in these houses, some of them occupied for centuries by the same old families. The kindly inhabitants courteously admitted visitors to see their treasures.

The same artistic taste was apparent in the large vaulted bazaars, in which at that period each article of common use deserved a place in a museum. Even the counters and low tables used by the artisans were made of fine old walnut wood, richly inlaid with mother-of-pearl. Roaming about this vaulted maze, we felt tempted to make a bid for utensils made of copper, steel and brass, or inlaid wood, and we brought back with us quite a collection of ewers, basins, cans, dishes and small tables, which

we afterwards used in furnishing our home in Beyrout. It is sad to think that large parts of Damascus have been subjected to violent and repeated shelling by the French troops, and completely destroyed. As photographs taken on the spot show, there is hardly anything left of the extensive Maidān quarter but a heap of ruins. Whatever the fire may have spared has disappeared in the looting which followed each bombardment. Many of the old inhabitants have left the town and sought refuge in Egypt or Palestine.

CHAPTER II

VISIT FROM THE KING OF THE SAMARITANS—RECEIVING A DELEGATION FROM THE MARONITES—CORRUPT ADMINISTRATION — FRENCH ASPIRATIONS — TURKISH PROCRASTINATION—CONFLICT AND FRIENDSHIP WITH THE PUBLIC PROSECUTOR

RETURNING from Damascus, we found a suitable house not far from the German Consulate. It contained, like all Beyrout houses, a *dar*, i.e. a large room, the north side of which consisted of one huge window giving a splendid view of the sea and of the Lebanon. The lofty Sannīn Mountain was still covered with snow, shining against the blue sky, forming a beautiful background to the strip of rich garden land at its foot and to the picturesque bay that stretched far inland. This high room, with its cool, white marble floor, was our principal resort in the hot weather that soon set in.

My chief, like other of his colleagues who did not go home on leave, spent the hot summer months on the Lebanon, leaving me in charge in town. I would send him the official correspondence every day and frequently spend the week-end with him in the hills. I cannot say that I suffered from the heat in Beyrout. Every afternoon we would ride to a lonely beach some distance south of the town to enjoy a refreshing swim in the sea, followed by a long canter over the downs and across the large pine forest which stretches between Beyrout and the Lebanon.

During this time I received a visit from a curious person, the 'King of the Samaritans', Sheikh Yaakūb ash Shalabi. He introduced himself by saying that he

knew my father well when he was Consul in Jerusalem. He had sometimes camped near Nablūs, in the valley between Ebal and Gerizim. Although more than thirty years had passed since then, he was still anxious to give me a proof of his sincere and lasting friendship by making me a present of a Hebrew copy of the Pentateuch. This manuscript, he said, was of great value, and considerable sums had repeatedly been offered him for it. But he had refused these, preferring to reserve the treasure for the son of his old friend. This generous gift embarrassed me because, obviously, I could not accept it without giving the donor an equivalent. When I hinted this to my visitor he protested loudly, saying that no sum of money could replace the possession of such a treasure, and that he could not accept anything in exchange for it from the son of his friend. He left the manuscript with me, a little hurt by my reserve. My chief, who was, as I have said, a great Oriental scholar, told me that several copies of the Pentateuch had been sold by the Samaritans, and that this copy had no particular value for scientific research. He advised me not to accept it, but, for curiosity's sake, to sound the Sheikh through Abdurrahman, the first cavass, as to what was expected in return. After some new protestations, the Sheikh came out with a sum out of all proportion to my income and to the value of the book. He finally decided to keep it, and to accept a small remuneration for his trouble and good intention.

The Samaritans claim to be the descendants of the ancient kingdom of Israel, and are thus the only remnant of the Lost Tribes. They are now reduced to a few families; at present they number one hundred and seventy-five men, women and children. It is curious to note that Sheikh Yaakūb had once gone to England and had been received by Queen Victoria with all honours due to a scion of the Royal House of David.

Another interesting visit was that of some delegates

of the Maronites of Mount Lebanon. After the fierce struggles between Maronites and Druses in 1860–61, which ended with great bloodshed, the Powers had stepped in to settle the affairs of Syria. They created an independent Lebanon State to be governed by a Christian Pasha. The French under Napoleon III had stood up as the protectors of the Maronites, who belonged to the Roman Catholic Church, whilst the English, being at that time looked upon as the great friends of Turkey and of Muhammedans in general, held their protecting hand over the Druses. But, whereas England left the Druses to their own devices as long as they did not foment trouble, the French exerted themselves to spread their language and their institutions amongst the Maronites and other Christians by means of schools, a university at Beyrout, and by every other sort of propaganda. This flattered many of the Syrians, especially the younger generation, who liked to call themselves 'nous autres Français du Liban' and some of whom were convinced they had reached the pinnacle of Western civilization when they had read half a dozen novels by Zola or Maupassant. At the same time, I am far from saying that the educational efforts of the French failed to do a great deal for the enlightenment and instruction of the Syrians, but it was noticeable that whatever was done was devised with the political object of gradually bringing the country under French influence with a view to ultimate annexation in the event of the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. This political tendency could not remain hidden from the more intelligent of the population, and it was amongst those who were foremost in the spreading of French influence among their countrymen that secret opposition had its roots. National feeling that had been awakened by the French and directed against the Turkish masters of the country gradually turned against its originators and created a tendency to free the country from the invisible yoke of the coming

masters, before shaking off the long-borne burden of Turkish supremacy. Turkish administration was certainly not good, and was an impediment rather than a promoter of progress, but the much-criticized shortcomings of Turkish rule, procrastination and corruption, were hardly resented by a population accustomed to such abuses from time immemorial. The example given by the 'independent' State of the Lebanon was not of a nature to convince the Syrians that a change of label improved the contents of the bottle. Nowhere, in fact, was judicial and administrative corruption more rife than in the government of the Lebanon. The Christian Governors, appointed for a period of five years, were, with few exceptions, only bent upon accumulating as much wealth as possible during their term of office to enable them to lead a comfortable life in Constantinople, or any other desirable residence, to the end of their days. They would bring with them a set of astute and unscrupulous Armenians or Levantines to assist them in this task. When I was in Beyrout an Armenian named Kotelian Efendi was the right hand of Franco Pasha, then Governor of the Lebanon. Nothing could be done without his intervention, and this could only be secured by considerable bribes. He was known by the nickname of Bakhshish (bribe) Efendi. Dining one evening at one of the little hotels on the Lebanon not far from Beyrout, I was asked by my neighbour, a gushing English lady who collected information for a book on the charms of the East: 'Who is that delightfully clever-looking Oriental sitting at the head of the table?' I told her that it was the celebrated Bakhshish Efendi, in whose dexterous hands lay the destiny of the Lebanon Principality. I was startled when, after dinner, Kotelian Efendi was introduced to her, she exclaimed: 'Oh, I have heard so much about you, I am delighted to make your acquaintance, Bakhshish Efendi,' but he apparently did not mind this in the least. In fact, corruption, even

when it assumed unusual proportions, was not an abuse likely to shock the feelings of the native population; on the contrary, it was looked upon as the only means of promoting business with the Government, besides being an old and recognized institution. But, on the other hand, those of the Syrians who were supposed to sigh under the burden of direct Turkish rule were not impressed with the changes for the better brought about by an administration instituted under the guidance of Western Powers.

This digression is, I think, necessary to place in the right light the visit of the Maronite delegates to the German Consulate in Beyrout. Four of the foremost representatives of the Maronites, all of them ecclesiastics, surprised me by pouring out their complaints against the French, and telling me that their leading men had agreed to place the Maronite nation under German protection, if this could be secured. They pointed out the advantages which they thought would accrue from German political influence to German commerce and economic enterprise. I listened to all they had to say and told them I would submit their wishes to my chief.

Dr. Schroeder approved of my not having committed myself in any way to the Maronites, and pointed out that Germany, if she at all acceded to their wishes, was certain to involve herself in a most disagreeable conflict with France, who, rightly or wrongly, claimed to be the protector of the Eastern Christians, especially the Maronites, and looked upon Syria as an object of future political expansion. Nothing the Maronites could offer would in any way counterbalance the probable danger of international complications. About twelve years later—I think it was in 1902—a similar delegation of representatives of the Maronites came to Berlin and was received by me, as head of the Oriental Department of the Foreign Office. I gave them no hope that Germany would in any way interfere in the political affairs in Syria, and they

left me very much disappointed. Baron Holstein, as well as Prince Bülow, quite took my view, and were pleased that I had not encouraged the Syrians to submit their case to higher quarters.

The subsequent submission of the whole of Syria to the French brought all these details back to my memory. Everybody knows now the bitter disappointment of the inhabitants of that beautiful country at the French rule, supported from the beginning by black soldiers from the Senegal, and by other colonial troops. Both parties, Maronites and Druses, offered a desperate but of course futile resistance to France. The independence of the Lebanon was swept away to make room for uniform administration, and the Druses hoped in vain for the assistance of England, whom they had looked upon as their protector and friend. Of course, they are free to apply to the League of Nations.

But during the happy days of my stay in Beyrout all the great political questions seemed to be awaiting, in a state of somnolence, the solutions a distant future might bring to them. Only the Consuls and other agents kept a watchful eye on anything that seemed likely to affect the rule of the Turkish Government. Russia went so far as to keep a secret military informer in Beyrout, an Armenian gentleman named Kamsaragan. All his doings were, of course, watched by the agents of other nations; the secrecy of his mission had no other effect than to make its bearer appear more important.

Germany took very little, if any, interest in the political affairs of Syria. Dr. Schroeder, it is true, had formerly written very interesting political reports about the country, of which he probably knew more than any other living man; but as he never received any acknowledgment of receipt or allusion to his reports from Berlin, he ended by keeping his knowledge to himself, and restricted his activity to the petty questions of local German interests. His great hobby being Turkish law, he took a

delight in supporting German—and sometimes pseudo-German—contentions before the Ottoman law courts. Amongst these was a dispute about a plot of sandy land situated on the Cape of Beyrout. This property was claimed by a native family, Seyyād, which was in some way connected with a German family. The lawsuit about the 'Seyyād Sands' had been proceeding for about twenty years when I came to Beyrout, and as yet only preliminary questions were being discussed. But it took up more and more of my chief's time and interest. When, in 1901, I was called into the Foreign Office and entrusted with the Oriental Department, I found that Herr von Holstein took some interest in Syrian affairs, as a part of the great question of the future of Turkey. He paid attention to my pessimistic views with regard to Turkey, all the more so as I was perhaps the only official person who did not join whole-heartedly in the general enthusiasm for the Baghdad railway and other German enterprises in the Ottoman Empire. As I had often the opportunity of quoting Dr. Schroeder as an authority on the subject, Baron Holstein suggested I should write privately to my former chief urging him to send some reports about the political situation of Syria. If he had done so, this might have made it possible for me to get my old chief moved to a European post, for which he longed. When, in 1905, Dr. Schroeder had left the service, I told him this and asked him why he had not written anything. He said he had been too busy.

'But what on earth can you find to do in a post like Beyrout to absorb all your time?'

'The Seyyād Sands,' was the answer.

So this lawsuit had lasted another fifteen years besides the twenty mentioned before. Possibly the World War has put an end to it, but I have never heard that this is the case.

I have said before that Dr. Schroeder's patience, which is proved by his perseverance in the long struggle over

the sands, would sometimes give way to outbursts of indignation at the wiles or the slackness of Turkish officials. In one case, which occurred towards the end of my stay at Beyrout, the 'Little Lion' had roared so vehemently at the Public Prosecutor that further personal relations between the two became impossible. I was consequently sent to that dignitary to demonstrate to him how wrong he was, and to continue my chief's attack on the shocking state of Turkish jurisdiction as represented by him. When I had sat down in the Public Prosecutor's room and drunk the inevitable small cup of coffee, I found that that gentleman, notwithstanding his perfect knowledge of classical Arabic, had great difficulty in making himself understood to me in that language.

'But can't you speak Turkish?' he said. 'We are, after all, in Turkey, and this is a Turkish law court. How is it that you don't know enough Turkish to discuss with me?'

I answered that as yet all transactions in the law courts at which I had been present had taken place in Arabic, and that I had not had time to learn Turkish as well as I knew Arabic, Hindustani and Persian.

'Persian!' he exclaimed. 'Do you speak Persian? In that case, we can understand one another perfectly, for I am a Kurd and consider Persian my native tongue. I know and adore Persian literature, and I have myself written Persian poetry.'

He began to quote verses, and the conversation took a purely literary turn. When he noticed that I also had some knowledge of Persian poetry and knew many fine passages of Saadi's 'Rose-Garden' and of Hafiz' odes by heart, he showed more and more delight in having at last found some one in Beyrout who could understand and appreciate what he prized most. We spent two hours without the slightest allusion to the question which had brought me to his house. When, at last, I began to speak about it, he said:

'Let us settle that stupid affair in five minutes, and then, if you have still half an hour to spare, allow me to show you a specimen of my Persian penmanship.'

After arranging the question of legal procedure in a way which satisfied both parties, he produced a little book, the leaves of which were of different colours, and covered with very fine Persian calligraphy. He read most of it to me with that enthusiasm for fine diction which I have only met in the East: it was an extract he had made of the 'Good advice' of Abdullāh-i Ansārī, a Persian poet who lived in the eleventh century and whose verses are still popular. When he heard that I was soon leaving Beyrout to go to Persia, he gave me the precious little manuscript as a parting gift. Soon after this I translated the 'Good advice' into German verse. It was my first translation of this kind. It was published in 1925 in a small collection of Oriental poems under the title *Hārūt and Mārūt.*

CHAPTER III

Excursion to the Cedars of Lebanon and to the Scene of the Legend of Venus and Adonis—Returning on an English Cargo Boat from Tripolis to Beyrout

MY stay in Beyrout was too short to allow me to visit the old Phœnician cities of Tyre and Sidon, which would have interested me very much, but I was fortunate enough to make an excursion on horseback to the Cedars of Lebanon with two very pleasant companions, one of whom was a German merchant, Consul Luetticke, who knew Syria inside out and possessed more scientific knowledge regarding the country than many a university professor. The scanty baggage we took on this expedition was stowed away in our saddle-bags and those of our two mounted grooms. Leaving behind us the narrow strip of coast with its luxuriant groves of orange, mulberry and olive trees, we reached the plateau of Shueir, where we found a clean little inn with excellent beds. We preferred doing the cooking ourselves, Herr Luetticke being a past-master in this art. The following days took us over wild and picturesque country, half-way up the snow-clad mountain of Sannīn. There the famous spring of Afka rushes forth out of a deep cave in the side of the perpendicular rock. This is the source of the Adonis River, and is the scene of the legendary love between Venus and Adonis, sung by so many poets of former ages down to Shakespeare. In the beginning of summer, the melting snows swell the waters of the Adonis River, now called Nahr Ibrahim, which are coloured by the red soil of the slopes of the mountain. This was believed to be the blood of Adonis oozing out of

the wound caused by the tusk of the wild boar. The death of Adonis, symbolizing the end of Spring, was celebrated all over Syria and Egypt. Near the spring are the ruins of the old temple of Adonis. This ancient building was destroyed by the command of Constantine the Great when he introduced Christianity and did away with all vestiges of pagan religious observance. The surroundings of the Afka spring were dotted with innumerable cypress trees. The cypress was known as the tree sacred to Venus. These trees resemble the fir tree so much that it took us some time to realize that they were really cypresses (see illustration). I am convinced that the tree mentioned in the Old Testament as furnishing the timber for Solomon's temple is not what we now call the cedar, but the wild cypress. The trunk of the cedar is not straight enough to form beams (see illustration), and its white wood is neither hard nor durable. The cypress, on the other hand, has high straight trunks, and its wood is so hard and so much impregnated with resin, that it will last for many centuries. I have seen rafters of cypress in the ruins of Ctesiphon 1,400 years old, which look as if they were quite new. The cypress grows in many parts of the Near East, including Persia, and is still used for making roofs in the mountainous districts where it is obtainable. No insect attacks this precious timber. Boxes made of cypress wood are employed everywhere to preserve woollen clothes from moths. In 1 Kings, chapters v. and vi., both cedar and cypress are mentioned as building material for Solomon's temple. To those who know the qualities of these two kinds of wood, it seems likely that the denominations have been inverted. However, the Hebrew word *arz* corresponds with the Arabic name for what we call the cedar, the Hebrew *beroch* seems always to designate the cypress. But it may possibly mean the pine tree, which is so characteristic of the coast towns like Beyrout. The name of this town may be derived from *beroch*.

The descent from Mount Sannīn on horseback was not easy. There were no roads, only rough tracks, but our horses passed over rocks and cliffs without harm. A natural bridge led us across the torrents of two springs, *Nab'al laban*, the Spring of Milk, and *Nab'al 'asal*, the Spring of Honey. In the deep-cut valley of Faraya we enjoyed the hospitality of the Maronite Sheikh. Unlike the Muhammedans, who hid their womenfolk from the gaze of a stranger, the Sheikh allowed his handsome young wife to sit with us at table, after she had prepared an excellent and most welcome dinner for us. I have often been struck by the easy, yet dignified manner in which the Arab ladies of Syria and Palestine conduct conversation.

The road that took us from Faraya to the Cedars was all uphill. It led us along the edge of the steep and often perpendicular side of the Valley of the Saints, *Wadi Kadisha*. Passing villages and hamlets poised on the very edge of the steep precipice, we at length reached the end of the gorge where a strong spring pours forth its cold clear water in a beautiful fall. Just over this waterfall is the celebrated grove of cedars, almost the only remnant of former large forests. The eighty-three old trees have been a place of pilgrimage for centuries, and I must say they deserve their fame. As we pitched our camp underneath their wide-spreading branches, we were joined by a friend from Beyrout, the American physician and missionary, Dr. Van Dyke, who had been called to a Maronite monastery to attend the aged Patriarch, our friend Monsignore Dahdah, who lay dying there. It had been too late for human help, and Dr. Van Dyke's efforts were restricted to giving the old gentleman such comforts as modern medical science could bestow.

'Give my best greetings to Dr. Rosen,' was one of the last things the Patriarch said.

'As soon as I see him.'

'You will see him soon,' was the almost prophetic answer.

We all regretted the loss of a dignitary who was far

THE CYPRESS OF LEBANON

SOURCE OF RIVER ADONIS

THE CEDAR OF LEBANON

before his time and above his surroundings in general knowledge and in tolerance towards other creeds, and who never, as far as I know, allowed himself to be drawn into the game of intrigue so dear to many of his countrymen.

Dr. Van Dyke gave me some of the photos he took on that journey. Their reproduction here will illustrate better than words what I have said about the cypress and the cedar of Lebanon. We felt tempted to prolong our stay near the cedars, though we did not, like Dr. Van Dyke, enjoy the luxury of tents. But duty called us back to Beyrout, so early next morning we descended the northern side of the gorge. As we led our horses along the precipitous ravine, we admired the grand landscape formed by the ever-widening Valley of the Saints and the imposing mountains in the background.

The descent took the better part of a long summer's day until we reached the plain where the foot of the Lebanon is merged into the rich groves and gardens of Tripolis. We chose a beautiful spot, under some ancient olive trees by the edge of a fast-flowing rivulet, to rest, and to finish our rather scanty provisions, when an Arab on horseback joined us and asked permission to take part in our meal. This placed us in an awkward position, because we had nothing to offer but the remainder of our lunch, consisting of a chicken stuffed with boiled rice. But the Arab said it was more our company he sought than a gorgeous repast. Our chicken being soon disposed of, he produced from his saddle-bag a large *kibbe*. A *kibbe* is, so to speak, the masterpiece of Syrian culinary art. Its preparation takes a good deal of time; its main ingredients are pounded meat mixed with *burghul* (whole-meal wheat) and with roasted seeds of the pine-nut, the whole being made into a hollow ball and baked in the oven. When a family made a *kibbe* they would give a part of it to the baker, and invite neighbours or friends to relish the rest with them. This Arab custom had been adopted by some of the American missionaries, and it was

in one of their houses that we first tasted the famous dish.

We felt grateful to our guest, who was at the same time our host, and would have liked to sit a little longer with him in the olive grove, had we not heard from him the news of the outbreak of cholera and of the impending quarantine. We rode into Tripolis as fast as we could, and found that just one more ship was going to Beyrout that night, before the quarantine regulations were to be put into practice on the following morning. It was an English cargo boat, and when we went on board we selected comfortable places on deck, and made our beds with cloaks and saddles. But soon the whole deck was crowded with Arabs, who wanted to avail themselves of this opportunity to avoid quarantine for two or three weeks in a dirty and uncomfortable camp. The Muhammedans of Tripolis, unlike those of Damascus, known for their friendliness towards Christians, at once began to encroach on our places and took up a menacing position. All the other passengers took their part, and we felt rather uncomfortable until I saw the English quartermaster, to whom I explained our situation. A few words in genuine sailor's English sufficed to silence the mob. When I asked him which of the languages spoken on the shores of the Mediterranean he knew, he answered: 'Strong language, I know, sir.' We spent a beautiful night under the bright stars of a cloudless sky, but when we anchored at dawn on the roads of Beyrout we were told we must wait for medical examination by the quarantine physician, and would probably have to go into quarantine for three weeks within sight of our houses. This was too much for Herr Luetticke. Notwithstanding the remonstrances of the Turkish authorities, he got into a rowing-boat which his cavass had brought alongside the ship, and hoisted the German flag, to the use of which his office of Hon. Vice-Consul entitled him, and went on shore with us before anyone could stop him. Such was the prestige of Consuls in the East in those days.

CHAPTER IV

Appointment to Teheran—Constantinople—Some Turkish Stories—End of the Dragomans

WE stayed a very short time in Beyrout, not quite eleven months. I received an order from the Foreign Office in Berlin to go as fast as possible—this injunction was always used in such cases—to Teheran to occupy the post of Oriental Secretary at the German Legation there. We were very sorry to have to say good-bye to many good friends, to sell our horses, our piano and our furniture, and to depart from that beautiful town where we had been so happy. We only took our Oriental rugs with us, with the aid of which we had made divans and easy chairs, and a few curios and souvenirs.

We went to Constantinople by a steamer which only stopped at Smyrna, then a flourishing town inhabited mostly by Greeks. We had time to visit the site of ancient Ephesus, where an English clergyman held an open-air service in commemoration of St. Paul. Going slowly through the Dardanelles, we saw the fortifications erected there by the Turks to protect their capital against the Christians. We little knew what an important part these fortresses were to play in the Great War. We spent a night in the Sea of Marmora and entered the Golden Horn in the early morning, enjoying a sight of marvellous beauty and grandeur. I will not, however, describe that wonderful town with its magnificent domes and lofty minarets, as this has been done often enough. I will only say that we were able to spend more than a

week there, to admire most of its wonders and to meet many interesting people.

The German Ambassador was then Herr von Radowitz, a diplomat who had enjoyed the favour of Prince Bismarck, and could have expected to be called for still higher functions. But after Bismarck's dismissal his good days came to an end, and, much against his wish, he was moved to the less important Ambassador's post in Madrid, where he remained until the end of his career. He once more played a part in foreign politics in 1906 during the Conference of Algeciras, of which I may talk in another volume. He advised me to call on the Persian Ambassador, of whom he had a high opinion. Accordingly, I went one day to the Palace of the Persian Embassy at Stamboul, and sent in my card, on which I had pencilled a few words in Persian. Muhsin Khan received me with open arms, evidently pleased to see a European who knew and appreciated his language. Of course, Persian poetry at once became the subject of conversation. Among the verses he quoted was the quatrain of Omar Khayyám about the 'Lion and the Lizard' in FitzGerald's rendering, which I had seen chiselled on the ruins of Persepolis (p. 59). Muhsin Khan spoke Persian to me, but he also spoke French like a *grand seigneur* of the eighteenth century. He was *doyen* of the Diplomatic Corps in Constantinople, a post which he filled to the satisfaction, and even to the admiration, of all the Ambassadors. Herr von Radowitz told me that many a difficult question had been solved and many a conflict avoided through Muhsin Khan's tact and ability. He wanted to invite me to a Persian meal, but this was impossible owing to my imminent departure. Soon after he was appointed Minister of Justice in Teheran, where he entertained the Diplomatic Corps with the most exquisite dinners in the European style. And one morning, when I called on him in his Palace in Teheran on some business matter, he asked me whether

I would not stay to lunch to partake of some truly Persian delicacies. I accepted, and said I would come back at lunch-time. 'No, my friend, that won't do. If the meal is to be truly good we must cook it ourselves, and you must help me.' We accordingly went to the court-yard which belonged to the kitchen, and there the Minister of Justice—'*chose qui du reste n'existe guère en Perse*,' as he wittily remarked—proceeded to cut and season the meat with fragrant herbs, etc., while the dignitaries of his Office and I tried to make ourselves useful by peeling potatoes, cutting onions and watching saucepans. The result was, of course, as excellent as the whole proceeding was unique.

Among the members of the German Embassy in Constantinople there was a very interesting man, the first interpreter, Dr. Testa. Descended from an old Genoese family, he was born and bred in Constantinople, where he had been his whole life, with the exception of a few years spent at German universities. Testa knew everything and everybody in Constantinople. He was renowned for his astuteness, the better part of which consisted of more frankness and honesty than his rivals would credit him with. To him, to a great extent, was due the privileged position which the German Embassy enjoyed for many years in the Turkish capital. The Turks trusted him, for he never played them false, and always treated them with due consideration. Ambassadors came and went, and attributed their apparent successes to their own ability, while Testa remained and quietly directed affairs according to his better insight. Herr von Radowitz was clever and just enough to recognize Dr. Testa's merits, and proposed that he should be entrusted with the post of Minister Resident in Tangier. This was considered an unprecedented promotion for an interpreter and a Levantine, and, unfortunately, it proved to be an entire failure. In his new post Testa was a fish out of water, and suffered a sort of moral collapse. He sent

no reports to Berlin, not even answers to distinct questions. In vain did the Foreign Office warn him, and in vain did his numerous friends remonstrate with him. Not a line was to be got out of him, so that finally he had to be dismissed by Bismarck, who had formerly thought well of him. He left Tangier and went straight to Berlin, whither he had been summoned. There he could give no explanation of his extraordinary conduct. Nor did he at all attempt to excuse himself, but simply pleaded guilty.

'But what on earth shall we do with you?'

'You can prosecute me, or cut my head off, or do with me what you like,' was his answer.

'But what would you yourself propose?'

'Well,' said he, 'if you allow me to express a wish, then send me back to my old post in Constantinople. Never mind about my rank or title. Take it back, and don't bother me with questions of etiquette. Let me be simply the first interpreter, which I have always been.'

So Testa resumed his former functions at the Embassy.

In the old days, when none of the high-placed Turks deigned to learn a European language, the importance of the Dragomans was almost unlimited. All the secret threads of the many plots and intrigues of the Powers with the Porte, and among themselves, passed through their hands. The Foreign Ministers were sometimes kept in the dark as to what was really going on. There were in those days no social relations between the Turks and the 'Infidels'. In the seventeenth century, the Foreign Ambassadors were considered as hostages to guarantee their country's good conduct towards Turkey, and some of them spent a considerable time in prison. When admitted to an audience, they would be insulted and humiliated by being placed on a very low stool. For a long time after this barbarous practice had come to an end, no Grand Vizier would ever condescend to visit a

European Ambassador in his house. It was only when, in the middle of the nineteenth century, Turkey sought the help of the Western Powers, especially that of England, that fanaticism somewhat relaxed. But even then the foreigners were looked upon as low and immoral. Dancing was considered indecent for ladies and gentlemen, especially when men danced with women dressed in low gowns who were not their wives. It was only when Sir Stratford Canning was British Minister to the Porte that, for the first time, a Grand Vizier—I think it was Rashid Pasha—consented to accept an invitation at the British Legation. But he refused to enter the ball-room, and looked at the strange spectacle from a gallery.

'Who is that bald man in a gold-embroidered coat who is spinning round with a half-naked female?' asked the Grand Vizier.

'The Russian Minister. He is dancing with the Marquise X, wife of the French Minister.'

'And who is that fat little man in an equally embroidered coat dancing with a woman whose bosom is exposed to the gaze of all men?'

'The French Minister, dancing with Countess Y, wife of the Austrian Minister,' was the answer.

The Grand Vizier, when he had recovered from his amazement, turned to Sir Stratford Canning and said: 'Up to this evening I have not believed you when you told me that England was the first country among the Christians, and that the others more or less depend upon her. Now that I see that the British Ambassador can make the representatives of the other Great Powers execute indecent dances before him like the lowest of professionals, I believe that England is the paramount Power and that the other nations must be her vassals.'

When my father, in the beginning of his career, was in Constantinople, this story was in everybody's mouth.

While Canning was still in Constantinople, Rashid

Pasha became Grand Vizier. He spoke French perfectly, having been partly educated in Paris. In those days the arrival of a tourist in Constantinople was a rare event. The power of the Foreign Ministers rested to a great extent on the scarcity and difficulty of communication with their Governments. They enjoyed much more independence than in our days of telegraph, wireless and quick travelling by land and sea.

One day an English lady arrived at Constantinople in her yacht. This happened at a time preceding the Crimean War, i.e. in 1852 or 1853. She expressed her wish to be received in private audience by the Sultan. In vain did the Ambassador endeavour to make her understand that such a demand was preposterous, and that even the official representatives often had difficulty in obtaining an audience. The lady insisted, and hinted that on her return to London she would make it known at Court and in Government circles that Canning's influence could not be as great as he pretended, if he was unable to arrange even such a trifling affair. The Ambassador went to the Grand Vizier—the one who spoke French—and asked him whether he could suggest any way out of the difficulty.

'Nothing is easier than that. Let the lady come to-morrow morning at ten to the Imperial Palace, but tell her that etiquette demands that she should be covered with jewellery. If she has not brought enough with her, let her borrow some from the ladies of the Legation.'

At ten o'clock the English lady was awaited by the Grand Vizier at the Palace, and led into a large room at the back of which an old gentleman was seated on a divan, smoking a chibuk. The lady made her curtsey, the Grand Vizier bowed nearly to the ground, and said in Turkish:

'Your Majesty, the Christian pedlar woman, about whose presence in the capital I have troubled your Majesty, has come to kiss the dust at your Imperial

Majesty's feet. For simplicity's sake, she has stuck her wares on her person.'

The Sultan: 'Let that female come a little closer so that I may see what she has got to sell, and ask her how much she wants for the whole lot.'

The Grand Vizier in French: 'His Majesty has deigned to express his high satisfaction that it should be a member of the English aristocracy who, for the first time, breaks through the strict etiquette of the Ottoman Court to procure him the pleasure of her personal acquaintance. His Majesty wishes you to approach somewhat nearer to his august person.'

The lady: 'Tell the Sultan I am delighted to make his acquaintance, and that I hope and believe that this interview will contribute to make the friendship between the two Courts and Governments still more intimate.'

The Grand Vizier: 'She says she won't take a penny less than five hundred thousand pounds.'

The Sultan: 'Chuck the impudent person out at once!'

The Grand Vizier: 'His Majesty has been so agreeably impressed by your visit, that he grants you the exceptional privilege of visiting his gardens.'

Thus the difficult diplomatic problem was solved to the satisfaction of all parties.

I have inserted these stories to show the great influence exercised formerly by those who were at the same time conversant with Turkish and a European language, and also to illustrate the changes which had come over Turkey in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Europeanizing movement which had begun in the days of Abdul Hamid has led to the complete abandonment of all the old ideas and institutions, as well as the manners and customs of the Ottoman Turks in our days. As time went on, the old type of Turkish Pasha and other high officials, who knew only their own language, disappeared. The new men all spoke and wrote French, and sometimes German or English, perfectly. This

made the hitherto all-important post of First Interpreter or Dragoman superfluous, and Dr. Testa left the service definitely, to end his days as representative of the German interest in the Turkish public debt, where his knowledge of affairs proved of great value. Most political affairs were now transacted in the usual manner, without the medium of an interpreter. Thus disappeared an old institution which had been characteristic of Constantinople, the Dragomans, whose *kaiks* (rowing-boats) had formerly crossed and re-crossed the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn in all directions, going from one office or Embassy to another in busy restlessness. On the waters of Constantinople one can see shoals of blackish water-fowl flying close to the surface without visible purpose from one place to another. They are said to be the souls of deceased Dragomans who find no rest after death and still continue crossing the waters. Will these birds some day disappear now that no more Dragomans are carried in their *kaiks* across the Bosphorus?

PART IV

PERSIA AGAIN

CHAPTER I

Towards Persia—Difficulties in the Russian Custom House—On Horseback to Kazvīn

PERSIA has at all times been a difficult country to get to, and Russia was at that time difficult to cross. In the custom house at Batum all our luggage was subjected to a careful examination, notwithstanding the official character of my journey to Teheran. Special umbrage was taken at our saddles, bridles and felt saddle cloths, and also at our blankets and quilts. In vain did I try to show that these articles were indispensable for an overland journey in a country without trains, carriages or hotels. I was shown a list of the objects which were considered travelling requisites in Russia, and saddles, etc., were not among them. I wired to the German Ambassador in St. Petersburg, but long before things were put right through his energetic intervention, we had to leave for Baku to catch a Russian mail-boat to Anzali on the Persian shore of the Caspian Sea. While we were rocking in front of this little village, we had time to admire the snow-clad mountains of Tālish and Gilan, whose lower part was clad with luxurious forests and merged into the emerald green strip of land that fringes the southern shore of the Caspian.

I had been unable to eat the heavy food served on board in a little saloon filled with the smoke of innumer-

able cigarettes, and was glad to find in a tea-house at Anzali a glass of delicious Persian tea and a bit of excellent white cheese and a pancake-shaped loaf of fresh bread, such as only Persia produces. As I did not know a word of Russian, it almost felt like returning home when I was able to converse freely with the people of the country.

The sea breeze swelled the sails of a boat which took us across the Murdāb, the 'Dead Water' of Anzali. But when we had entered the mouth of a small river, we were towed along by three men until we reached Piri Bazar. I have spoken in a former chapter of the dejected building surrounded by untidy heaps of bales and packing-cases, among which a vociferous crowd of poorly-clad human beings was wading in deep mud. After the unavoidable loss of time and temper, I got a muleteer to take us and our luggage on his pack-horses to Rasht, the capital of Gilan. This very picturesque town is quite unlike the towns and villages of the interior. Its bazaars and houses are built partly of wood. The roofs are tiled and not flat. Owing to the frequent rains the whole place is green and full of vegetation. Moss covers the walls and ferns grow in all the crevices.

I at once went to the bazaars and bought two Persian saddles which were more picturesque than comfortable, and a number of very thick and soft felt rugs. These were really meant for horse covers, but we used them as mattresses on our march across the mountains. A kindly quilt-maker offered to make for us two large quilts of cotton-wool covered with Isfahan hand-painted cotton sheets called *kalamkar*—within a few hours. We were able to start in the afternoon mounted on fairly good horses, while our baggage was carried by mules.

This mode of travelling made up for the discouraging impression Piri Bazar had made on my wife, and when we had proceeded a few hours to Kuhdum, a post-house situated at the brim of the great Gilan forest, she was

quite enraptured with the beautiful scenery. She also enjoyed her first endeavours to speak Persian with the aid of the little book I had written for the use of travellers in Persia.

At night we used to make ourselves comfortable with our felts and quilts on the well-swept floors of the *chapar khanes*, or post-houses, while every day we were able to admire the most beautiful scenery. I have already spoken of the route which leads along the banks of the large and torrential River Safīdrūd through a magnificent virgin forest, through the trees of which we could catch an occasional glimpse of imposing snow-covered mountains. Sometimes we would meet a caravan of mules coming in an opposite direction. The track being too narrow for us to pass loaded animals, we had to seek a spot of safety as soon as we heard the deep humming of the large bells carried by the leading animals. These bells are mostly two feet high and are of the shape of a beehive. Once we had a narrow escape because my wife's horse refused to pass four big vultures that were sitting on the land side of the path. On the other side was a sheer precipice of some hundred feet, at the bottom of which the river was roaring. Force would have been of no avail with the frightened animal, and there was not space enough to dismount. It would also have been dangerous to chase the vultures away because the flapping of their enormous wings would most likely have increased the horse's terror. In the meantime the sound of the bells of a large caravan was growing louder and louder. The situation was saved by a young shepherd who seized the horse's bridle and gently led it past the vultures to the mouth of a side valley where we could let the caravan pass. I afterwards bought one of those big caravan bells as a remembrance of our adventure. It now serves as a dinner gong in my country-house.

The boy whose help had been so welcome to us was

much pleased at the reward we gave him. He walked a long way with us because he was afraid of the *dīvs*, —evil spirits—which, he assured us, infest that region. Although the most terrible of these, the *dīv-i safīd*, or White Demon, had been disposed of more than a thousand years ago by the great Persian hero Rustam, as the poet Firdousi has told us in his famous 'Shahnameh,' the inhabitants of those hills are still afraid of him. A demon is an *ἀθάνατον κακόν*, an immortal evil. Our boy told us many a tale about benighted travellers being carried away and devoured by these monsters.

He also showed us an island in the river which had been the scene of another tragedy. A rich man from Rūdbār had been told by an astrologer that he would die from a snake-bite. To avoid this the man settled on that island where no snake could reach him. His food was sent every day to him in a basket by means of a rope that connected the island with the bank. One day a basketful of grapes was sent in this way to the hermit, who, when he put his hand into it to take out the grapes, was bitten by a snake that was hidden among them. This was to prove that no man can escape his fate or defer the hour of death which has been fixed on the morn of beginningless eternity.

As Omar says in one of the quatrains not translated by FitzGerald:

'Go, look upon the tablet, for the master penman on the day of beginningless eternity
Has inscribed thereon all that is to be.'

(Verse 30 of my literal translation.)

It took our little caravan six days to reach Kazvīn. The last night we put up at the village of Āghā Bābā, a square surrounded by mud walls, with little mud houses inside. The whole place was clean and tidy, especially a room which one of the inhabitants placed at our disposal. The air was bitterly cold, and we had to warm the room with a *mangal*, a large brazier made of clay and filled

with charcoal. My wife was afraid we might be asphyxiated, but I reassured her by telling her that that was impossible, because in Persia doors and windows are so made that cats and dogs can pass through even when they are closed. This was proved by a dish of milk-rice which we had kept for the morning, having been eaten up by cats during the night.

From Kazvīn to Teheran we were able to use a carriage which was drawn by four horses harnessed abreast. These were changed at each station after having run for twenty-four kilometres.

CHAPTER II

ARRIVAL AT TEHERAN—CHANGES IN THE BRITISH LEGATION—SIR HENRY DRUMMOND WOLFF—SIR FRANK LASCELLES—STUDIES, SHOOTING AND TROUT-FISHING—PERSIAN FRIENDS AND ENTERTAINMENTS—VISITING A FORBIDDEN SANCTUARY IN DISGUISE—CONDITION OF PERSIAN LADIES

IT was exactly a year after we had left Berlin to go to Beyrout in Syria, that we arrived in Teheran. It was the 14th of April, and all the gardens were still in their spring garments. The scent of roses and the song of nightingales permeated the northern suburb where all the Legations and the private residences of most Europeans were located. Our carriage drew up at the German Legation, where we were at once shown into our comfortable abode in a garden house. After the much-needed ablutions and change of attire we met the Minister, Baron Schenck zu Schweinsberg, who was now my chief, in the main building, and breakfasted with him. He showed us all over the house and garden and the stables which contained eight saddle-horses. He had not in the least changed since I had met him four years ago, but showed the same aspect of health and jovial manner as before.

He told us that that afternoon a picnic was to be given by the French Legation at Yūsufābād, a fine Persian country-house and garden outside the town.

I knew our host, the French Minister, Monsieur de Balloy, but not yet his young wife whom he had recently married and brought out to Persia. In those days all

the Legations and their staffs were on the best of terms, but there existed a special intimacy between the French and the German Legations. This was the case in most of the diplomatic posts, even in such places where otherwise the diplomats lived like cats and dogs.

All the many more or less beautiful old gardens in and near Teheran had one feature in common. They all had fine avenues running from north to south, following the streams of the water conducted by subterranean channels from the mountains. But what made the real beauty of these avenues was that their background was formed by the lofty and snow-clad range at the foot of which the capital is situated. The nearest mountain of the Alburz chain, the Touchāl, is about 3,800 m. high. It provides the town with its freshness and its clear—though not over-plentiful—water, and with the agreeable aspect of its large snow-fields. Not very far to the east is seen the sugar-loaf cone of Damavand, about 6,000 m. high and always covered with snow.

I renewed acquaintance with some, and got introduced to other guests.

My former host, Sir Arthur Nicolson, had left Persia not long after my visit, when Sir Henry Drummond Wolff was appointed British Minister at the Shah's Court. Sir Henry was the remarkable son of a perhaps still more remarkable father, who had conceived the plan of finding, somewhere in Central Asia, the ten lost tribes of Israel, i.e. those which had not returned to Palestine from exile in Assyria. All the Jews now existing claim to be descended from the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, which formed the kingdom of Judea, of which Jerusalem was the capital. The problem of finding the lost tribes had occupied the minds of many people in England and America in the middle of the nineteenth century, and many theories had been put forward with regard to their disappearance, for, as far as I know, they were never again mentioned in the Bible, or in other sources of

ancient history. The only descendants of the inhabitants of the northern kingdom are the Samaritans, who continue to live in their old country, and whose king I had met at Beyrout.

So they had to be sought elsewhere. Some thought the Red Indians of America were the descendants of the Chosen People, others put forward the view that this honour belonged to the British Nation. In the East the Afghans claimed to be the Children of Israel, most of their history books containing a legend according to which King Solomon was the forefather of their nation. It was in Central Asia that Mr. Wolff thought there might be traces of the Israelites. He planned an expedition into those parts which, at that time, i.e. the middle of the nineteenth century, were almost unexplored and difficult of access. He managed to interest prominent or wealthy people in his scheme, asking each one he approached for a contribution of £10. I have been told that when he came to Lord Palmerston with his plan for finding the lost ten tribes, Lord Palmerston answered: 'I will give you £100 if you will lose the remaining two.' Although the principal object of Mr. Wolff's expedition to Central Asia was not attained, yet it had appreciable results in widening the knowledge of some interesting and, at that time, practically unknown regions.

I do not know whether Disraeli was among the promoters of Mr. Wolff's scheme, but the latter's son we find closely connected with the earlier part of Lord Beaconsfield's career. He was a strong supporter of his and Lord Salisbury's political action with regard to the Eastern Question, and had subsequently been entrusted with important diplomatic missions in Egypt and Constantinople.

When, in 1888, Sir Henry Drummond Wolff was appointed British Minister at Teheran, he took the initiative in attempting to create new interests for his

country in Persia. In a few of his schemes, such as that of the navigation of the Kārūn River, he was successful, but a mining company, a road company and other plans were failures. Not long after his arrival, his mind became seriously disturbed, and he had ultimately to be transported on a mule across the Alburz Mountains to the shore of the Caspian Sea, whence he was taken to England. This very painful episode was still the subject of conversation among the diplomats of Teheran, when the surprising news arrived that he had quite recovered, and had been appointed British Ambassador to the Spanish Court. When, soon after, I asked Sir Valentine Chirol how this extraordinary nomination was to be explained, he answered: 'The only possible explanation is that Lord Salisbury is Jack the Ripper, and that Sir Henry Drummond Wolff is the only living being who knows this ghastly secret.'

Wolff's activity had not made England's position easier in the dominions of the Shah, as it had immediately awakened the jealousy of Russia, and had prompted her to adopt a more energetic policy. It was some time before Sir Frank Lascelles was appointed British Minister to the Persian capital. Lascelles was not only a diplomat of very high standing, but also an old friend. Reviewing the lengthy list of all the many diplomats I have met during my long career, I do not find anyone who appears to me to have been a more perfect representative of his calling than Sir Frank Lascelles. His best quality was that he was a gentleman even in his profession, never false, never over-astute, always well informed, and always even-tempered even in trying situations. He had, amongst others, one quality that cannot be sufficiently appreciated. He was supremely lazy. This may seem a paradox, but is nevertheless quite true. Nobody does more harm to international relations than the bustling diplomat, and nobody gives more scope to suspicion and ill-feeling than the inquisitive busybody who tries

to glean material for his reports from every conversation, and does not shrink from asking inopportune questions. Sir Frank Lascelles never seemed to do any work at all. A late riser, he would get through his Chancery business during the short interval between breakfast and lunch, spend the afternoon riding or playing tennis, and the evening at whist, a game which had not yet been displaced by the world-conquering game of bridge. He gave his staff every chance of individual activity, controlling more than directing their work. He rode his Legation, so to say, with loose reins, but he rode it well. The great struggle between English and Russian policy in Central Asia, which everybody thought must sooner or later lead to a war, had thrown its shadow on the personal relations of the Teheran representatives of those two empires, but Lascelles showed so little concern for the petty points of dispute or rivalry, that he disarmed the eagerness of his adversaries. This was not an easy task, for some of the Russians kept aloof from the rest of the European society, and their Legation was in the inner town at some distance from the other diplomats' residences. M. de Butzow, an elderly gentleman and father of a large family, was then Russian Minister. He was personally of a friendly disposition, but he could not swim against the current of certain tendencies which moved Russian official policy as well as private political enterprise. His two handsome daughters, Nina and Olga, were longing to play tennis with all the other young people, but the light attire of the young men, a flannel shirt and flannel trousers '*attachés seulement par un mouchoir*', shocked Muscovite propriety, and the poor girls were not even allowed to look on at the immoral game.

I am not far out if I say that there were only two Political Missions in Persia, the English and the Russian. The diplomats not belonging to these were merely spectators. They made the best of life in a place which

they all considered an exile, and waited to be removed to a livelier post. The only exception was the French Minister, M. de Balloy, who made some pretence at speaking Persian and knowing the country. This ambition was a grievous crime, and grievously hath he atoned for it. His Government appreciated his special knowledge so much that it left him there for over twenty-five years, until he got so bored that he ultimately tendered his resignation. All the other diplomats affected, I think justly, an utter ignorance of the Persian language and anything connected with Persia. They felt intensely bored, and let others realize it. All this, however, does not apply to the staff of the British Legation, who, by a wise measure, were induced to study the language of the country they were living and working in. They got an extra £50 on passing an examination in Persian, corresponding to the 'lower standard' examination in India. All junior members of the British Legation, as far as I remember, went in for this examination, and Sir Frank's then seventeen-year-old daughter, Miss Florence Lascelles, passed it. Although the original inducement was money, and although the preparation for this examination did not demand very deep study, yet most of the English secretaries developed an interest in the language, literature and history of the country and got to know much more about it than most of the other young diplomats. Some, like Sir Arthur Hardinge and Sir Charles Hardinge, are specimens of this class of English diplomat. The former, when my English colleague at Lisbon in 1912–13, astonished me by his thorough knowledge of Persian affairs, and his less learned but more brilliant cousin, Sir Charles Hardinge, afterwards Lord Hardinge of Penshurst, must have found his Persian accomplishments very useful when, as Viceroy of India, he had, on State occasions, to hear or maybe to deliver an address in Persian, until recently the traditional State language of that country. The first

interpreter of the British Legation, Mr. Sidney Churchill, was, of course, a perfect Persian scholar. His speciality was bibliography, and he has provided the libraries of the British Museum and of the India Office with many a rare manuscript.

Talking of Persian scholars, I must here mention General Sir Alexander Houtum Schindler, who was looked upon as an oracle by all those to whom, as to myself, Persia was an object of interest and study. He was a German by birth. He had entered the service of the Indo-European Telegraph Company and had become a British subject. I had made his acquaintance on my first ride across Persia. I now called on him and renewed that acquaintance. He at once asked me what I intended to do in Persia. 'Why, of course, to do the work of my Legation.' This answer by no means satisfied him.

'If you mean to do no more than that, then you needn't have come at all. Your Legation has nothing to do except to write a few reports on Russia's and England's doings here. Don't fritter your time away with futilities, but take up some subject and study it thoroughly. There are the geography, the history, the philosophy, the poetry, the arts, the fauna, the flora, of the country, etc., etc. Which of these will you choose? You need not answer me at once, young man; think it over, and come back and tell me. Whatever it is going to be, I will help you with my advice, and with my library.'

A few days later I told him that I wished to take up the history of the two last centuries, and, besides that, to read some poetry. Schindler nodded his head in approval, and was always of the greatest assistance to me in my studies. I owe him a great debt of gratitude.

During the interval between my first and second visits to Persia, a rising English Member of Parliament had travelled extensively through Persia with a view to writing a book. It was Mr. Curzon—the well-known

statesman, Lord Curzon of Kedleston of later days. The result of his journey was a big book of two volumes, *Persia*, which he not very modestly, yet justly, himself designated as 'The standard book on Persia'. He owes at least nine-tenths of the information his book contains to Schindler, of whose library and of whose many notes and unpublished books and articles he made the freest use. It has frequently been said that Curzon looted Schindler, and that he had not paid sufficient homage to the man to whom he owed his success, and without whose help he could hardly have written his work. I think this is too harsh a judgment. If Curzon had not got hold of Schindler's notes and advice, all Schindler's knowledge would have almost surely been lost to posterity. As it is, Curzon has made an excellent book of it, and it must be recognized that he has bestowed on its composition an astounding amount of study and skill, so that every Persian scholar will read it with as much pleasure as profit. I was so much interested in Mr. Curzon that I later on asked a friend to introduce me to him in the House of Commons in London, where I had a very interesting conversation with him. A much less pleasant experience, which I had with Lord Curzon in 1921 when he was Foreign Secretary in London and I Minister of Foreign Affairs in Berlin, will possibly be recorded in another volume.

There was yet another distinguished traveller who came to Persia between my first and my second visits to that country, Edward G. Browne, Professor of Oriental Languages at Cambridge. A very fascinating account of his journey, *A Year amongst the Persians*, was published soon after, and was reprinted after his death in 1926. I only made Browne's acquaintance at an Orientalists' Congress at Copenhagen in 1908. We became great friends and I looked upon him as my 'spiritual guide', as the Persians would call it. I shall say more about him in a later chapter.

Looking backward, I am glad I followed General Schindler's advice. If I had not taken up Persian studies the only alternative left me would have been a continual card game. Had I chosen this, I should perhaps have lost little money, but certainly very much time. But I will not here belittle the merits of cards in diplomatic society. It is the means of spending one's time in the company of one's colleagues, without being tempted to let one's information or one's plans ooze out in the course of conversation. And I have found that at least some diplomats, like Lascelles, were always wonderfully informed, although they spent every evening at the card table.

But what I did do in the way of recreation was a great deal of outdoor exercise, riding, and especially tent-pegging, and training unbroken horses. There were excellent horses in Persia, fine Arabs from the south, powerful cobs from the north-west, tall, slim and wiry Turcomans from the north-east. There were very few carriages and no motor-cars at that time at Teheran. We used to go about to tennis, tea-parties, dinners, etc., on horseback, especially in the country.

There was also excellent shooting in the hills as well as in the plains, but I never enjoyed the killing of animals, and used to go on shooting expeditions more for the outing than for the sake of a bag. Of big game, there were bears in the Alburz Mountains, and also tigers in the jungles that covered the slopes verging towards the Caspian Sea. Wild mountain sheep (*moufflons*) and goats, ibex, stags, roe-deer, leopards, lynxes, wild-boar, etc., abounded in different parts of the Alburz range. Thirteen species of partridge, as well as snipe, woodcock, pheasant, and wild duck, were plentiful. Trout, as well as salmon-trout, abounded in some of the cold mountain streams that flowed to the Caspian Sea. English is an uncomfortable language for amateur sportsmen. In German or in French you can go *auf die Bärenjagd* or

à la chasse au tigre, but in English you can only go 'tiger shooting' or 'bear shooting', whereas in German or French you need not necessarily shoot anything. Many a time have I spent days of dangerous and tiring rock-climbing in the high mountains to get at a bear or at some ibex. Traces enough of these beasts were to be seen, but to get a fair shot was a rare event, and my bags were mostly not to be boasted of. But our camp life in those picturesque and lofty hills or in the wide-stretching deserts at their foot was delightful. Long and regular periods of unbroken dry weather made it possible to live in tents for weeks or months at a time. In the hot summer months we mostly went camping in the Lar Valley, where we did nothing but trout-fishing after the rules of this highly-developed science. We had the best rods and hooks sent out from England, and we used to discuss the merits of certain flies or combinations of flies during the long evenings after the short twilight had hurried us back to our tents. Whenever we caught a sufficient number of trout we used to pack them in snow, and send them through the night by a special messenger to the ladies who had remained in town or in Shimran. We thought we had acquired the highest degree of efficiency in catching the wily fish. It was a crushing experience to us when one day we saw a nomad who had tied one of the hooks we had thrown away to a short crooked stick by means of a bit of ordinary string, casting this ridiculous implement and pulling out three capital fish within a few minutes. But this did not discourage us.

All the Legations had their summer residences in Shimran, a district stretching along the first low terrace of the Alburz Mountains at a distance of about ten miles from Teheran. The Shah and many Persian grandees also had their palaces and gardens in Shimran. Every spring there was a general exodus of Persians and Europeans towards the different Shimran villages and

summer houses, where they used to stay till the autumn. We went with our chief, Baron Schenck, to the village of Dizāshub, where we had leased an extensive garden with two picturesque houses. All these country houses being empty, everything in the way of mats and carpets, bedding and furniture, glass and crockery, as well as stores and provisions of all sorts, had to be taken up from town. All glass and china articles were placed on large round trays, and carried by men on their heads to their destination. Breakages occurred very rarely, and the guild of carriers was held answerable for what was broken. Tables, chairs and other articles of furniture were loaded on mules and donkeys, and were exposed to collisions on the way. I used to ride behind these caravans, accompanied by a servant who carried wide saddle-bags, to hold the legs of my chairs and tables and other débris, which I picked up out of the dust of the road.

There were a few *fourgons*, big carts drawn by three or four horses, for the transport of the heaviest things, like pianos or cases of books. Baron Schenck had proposed that we should share one of these carts with him, to carry, among other things, two tanks of petroleum for his lamps and ours. When we arrived, we found that one of these tanks had leaked, and had run quite empty. I must here insert that Baron Schenck was a most amiable chief, and perhaps the most popular of all German Ministers who had been accredited to the Court of the Shah. He was manly and sportsmanlike, jovial and hospitable, and possessed so much common sense that, in after years, my wife and I, whenever a difficult decision had to be taken, used to ask ourselves: 'What would Schenck have done?' We were great friends, and he hardly ever rode out without asking us to join him. But there was one point on which we could not quite agree. He was absolutely convinced of the innate and intrinsic superiority of the diplomat over all other

categories of mortals. He might think a man clever, charming, reliable—but the one thing, the deeper insight into all things, the superior intellect, only the born diplomat could call his own. We were very little inclined, from what we had seen of him, to credit him with these unattainably high qualities, until the day of our move to Dizāshub, when one of the petroleum tanks had run empty. He at once discovered that the empty tank was ours and the full one his, although the two were for all practical purposes quite alike and bore no mark or inscription indicating ownership. Up to this day I have not been able to make out how he ascertained that the broken tank was ours, and I cannot but admit his intellectual superiority.

We used to work every day until lunch-time. In the afternoon we would go for a ride or play tennis at Gulahek, the summer residence of the British Legation, or call on Persian Princes or Ministers in their beautiful gardens. On these occasions I had to interpret for my chief. This was not always a very easy task, because Baron Schenck had his own ideas about the Persians and their customs. One day we were visiting the Minister of Finance, Amīn al Mulk, brother of the Grand Vizier, a very strict and pious Muhammedan, but at the same time a usurer who would keep back the pay of soldiers and officials, in order to lend the money at a high rate of interest. My chief told me to invite His Excellency to a ball where there would be very much champagne and many lovely ladies. I was to ask him also to bring some jolly young Persian ladies along with him. This would have justly scandalized a Persian whose womenfolk at that time were kept in strict seclusion, and after whose health one was not even allowed to inquire. I hesitated. 'Do tell him what I said,' urged my chief, while, on the other hand, Amīn al Mulk was curious to know what it was that I was holding back. At last I gave the following rather free translation:

'The German Minister, my chief, considering all the blessings Persia derives from your Excellency's financial administration, wishes you to know that he spends his days and nights praying for your Excellency's welfare.'

This was the nearest I could get to my chief's idea without creating a serious set-back to German influence, and both parties were satisfied.

Amongst the Persians there were many who were distinguished by intelligence and knowledge. In fact, the higher classes were certainly most cultured, and pleased every one by their exquisite good manners. They were very hospitable, and took pleasure in entertaining their Western friends at their sumptuous and beautiful palaces. Some of them gave dinner-parties in the European style which could vie with the highest culinary attainments of the Legations. But they did these *faranghi* dinners more in the spirit of a concession to the Europeans than because they themselves relished them. I remember the first big official dinner the Grand Vizier Amīn-as Sultān gave in his newly-built palace. When at length the long *menu* came to an end and butter and cheese were being served, the Grand Vizier, as well as the Prime Minister, each picked out a bit of white Persian cheese from the midst of the Dutch, Swiss and French varieties. I noticed the Grand Vizier nodding to his colleague, saying: 'What a good thing bread and cheese is, after all,' meaning that, so far as he was concerned, the whole elaborate dinner might as well have been thrown to the dogs.

Dancing was in those days considered undignified and immoral by the Persians, especially when performed by a man with another man's wife. Orientals are very fond of dancing, but they do not do so themselves: they keep slaves or professional dancers for that purpose. Like the Turks of former days, they used to look down upon European ladies who danced half-naked, as it appeared to them, before men. It would have been

better if Europeans had never invited Persians to a ball. All that, however, is now changed.

Those Europeans who were privileged to be asked to purely Persian entertainments, invariably found them original and interesting. The guests would be received in the state rooms of the men's apartments, and treated to a variety of salted and roasted seeds, nuts, pistachios, almonds, etc., and small glasses of very fine tea and *arak*, a strong liquor made out of grapes. At the same time the *kalians*, big water-pipes or hubble-bubbles, would be handed round. Often the bowls of these pipes were made of silver or of gold, and encrusted with turquoises or other precious stones. The Shiraz tobacco used for these pipes is fragrant and delicious. The smoke is cooled by passing through a vessel filled with water. Musicians and singers usually appear on these occasions. They play their quaint stringed instruments, squatting on the carpet. The music is very rhythmical, and carries away the singers as well as the audience. Persian singing is passionate and *entrainant*. Nobody can really understand the beauty of the songs of the great lyric poets, such as Hafiz (fourteenth century), unless he has heard them sung by Persian minstrels. Sometimes, but only among intimate friends, the singing was followed by dancing. The dancers were mostly handsome boys dressed and painted like girls. Frequently these dances went beyond the limits of what we consider decent and proper. These entertainments continue until the principal guest declares himself to be hungry and asks for dinner. Then the door leading to an adjacent room is opened, the carpet of which is spread with a large tablecloth. The greater part of this tablecloth is covered by the dishes, the sides alone being left free for the guests to squat upon. There are no courses. The whole meal is served, and every one takes what he fancies. Only the right hand is used for eating, the left being considered unclean. Before and after the

meal, a ewer and basin are handed round for washing one's hands. The whole meal does not last more than about twenty minutes, time enough to eat sufficiently of the excellent things spread before you, as there are no intervals between the courses and no speeches.

Persian cuisine is of exquisite delicacy. Different kinds of partridges, chickens, venison or mutton are eaten with large quantities of rice. Persian rice is the best in the world, and much care is bestowed on its preparation. A Persian cook takes twenty-four hours just to boil his rice properly. Meat is always well cooked, never underdone. If it were, it would be too difficult to carve, because this has to be done by hand. Knives and forks were not used except by Europeans at a truly Persian meal. As soon as the repast is finished and the ewer passed round, everybody rises, saying, '*Alhamdulillah*,'—'Praise be to God,'—and then almost immediately departs to seek his home and his bed, so that the heaviness of the dinner should make him go to sleep quickly and soundly.

But what gives these entertainments their principal charm is the witty and refined conversation of the educated Persian. Hardly any other nation can be said to know its own literature so thoroughly, and to adorn its talk with such appropriate quotations from its poets.

Amongst the many studies that Persians pursue more or less for their pleasure, philosophy is foremost. When I lived in Teheran, I belonged to three circles of men who used to meet to discuss philosophy. They all were keen on hearing something about our Western philosophical ideas, but they seldom appreciated them. They mostly found them too matter of fact, and too materialistic. I made great friends with the Shah's son-in-law and Master of Ceremonies, Zahīr ad Daula, who was at the same time a dervish or mystic philosopher. Absolute toleration of other creeds was one of the first

principles of his order, which he asked me to join. When I pointed out to him that it was out of the question that I should abandon my Christian creed, he answered that it was not the creed but the state of one's mind that made one fit to be a dervish. One day, he proposed to take me, dressed in Persian costume, to the much venerated shrine of Shah Abdulazīm, near Teheran, where no Christian had ever penetrated. It was a very risky thing to walk through all the barriers which were erected to exclude the infidel from the vicinity of this sacred place, especially as my tall figure and general appearance betrayed the Northerner. But he reassured me by saying that as long as the people could hear me talk Persian, they would get over their suspicion. When we reached the entrance of the beautiful mosque with its golden dome and its lofty turquoise tiled minarets, we left our shoes and canes outside, and were taken by the hand by two priests in white turbans, who led us up the alabaster steps. They recited Arabic verses and formulæ used in the pilgrimage service. We had to repeat these with true Arabic pronunciation, which, happily, I was able to do. Then we were slowly led around the silver and blue enamel railing that surrounded a sarcophagus, the tomb of a saint, covered with costly Cashmere shawls and Persian embroideries, all the while repeating the chant of the two priests. The stalactite vault that formed the inside of the huge golden dome was beautifully adorned with prismatic mirrors, and the lower part of the inside wall was panelled with alabaster. In a similar way we visited a second holy tomb, and all parts of the sanctuary, including the women's mosque, which, however, happened to be empty. Suddenly I noticed that some men, who were reading the Koran aloud, kept their eyes on me, and seemed at one moment ready to jump from their seats and deliver me up to the easily excitable and always fanatical multitude. I looked anxiously at my friend, but he only whispered

to me, 'Speak.' As soon as the Koran readers heard me talk in fluent Persian they seemed reassured and returned to their reading. I felt nevertheless very much relieved when I had left the precincts of the mosque, and was able to mount my horse again. Zahīr ad Daula had perhaps been still more awake to the danger of the moment, for he at once sent one of his men galloping to town to tell my wife that I was in safety. Afterwards he told me that if my not being a Muhammedan had been discovered, I would not have left that place alive, and that even my dead body would have been torn to little bits by the infuriated believers.

I used to spend many a quiet winter afternoon at Zahīr ad Daula's house in Teheran, looking through his unique library of old and new Persian books. Among them were many precious manuscripts, some of them beautifully illuminated with ornamental designs, and exquisite miniatures. The most precious of his books was a copy of the *Gulistan*, the 'Rose-Garden' of Saadi, purported to have been written in the lifetime of that great poet by the famous calligrapher Yaaqut Musta'simi for the use of the Caliph Musta'sim, who met with a violent death in A.D. 1258. If I had shown too keen an interest in this unique treasure, I am sure my generous friend would have offered it to me as a present. This I felt I could never have accepted. I therefore had to express my admiration very carefully, always adding the words: '*ma sha Allah*', which meant 'Whatever God's Will may be must come true', even the preservation of such a treasure for more than six centuries. Years later, in 1909, in a revolutionary movement, Zahīr ad Daula's house was first bombarded and then ransacked and burnt. I am afraid the oldest manuscript of the 'Rose-Garden' disappeared for ever on that occasion, and I deeply regret my delicacy and reserve.

Zahīr ad Daula initiated me in the mysteries of *bhang* smoking. This poisonous drug is the same as that

which the Arabs call *hashīsh*. It is made from the juice of Indian hemp (*Cannabis indica*). Its effect is a thousand times more dangerous than that of opium. It takes away the sense of one's own weight, and also of one's responsibility. Those who were accustomed to take this drug regularly were called by the Arabs *hashshāshīn* (the plural of *hashshāsh*). In the days of the Crusaders, these *hashshāshīn* would, in their intoxication, run amuck and stab the Christians they met on their way. The word has been adopted by the French. The French '*assassin*' and the English 'assassin' are derived from it. I only tried it once, but took too little to feel any real effect. My friend never indulged in it either, after having tried it for curiosity's sake. He also made a great point of never tasting wines or spirits of any kind. One day, however, when he was paying us a visit at Gulahek, then our summer residence, he asked for a small glass of cognac with his dinner. When the butler had filled the glass, my friend seized the bottle, and told the man to leave it there in case it should be wanted again. He then quietly emptied it glass by glass without showing any change whatever. I concluded that a man who could drink a pint of strong liquor with impunity could not be quite unaccustomed to alcohol. But apart from occasional exceptions, he professed to be the most rigorous total abstainer. On the whole, the Persians were a most sober nation. Most of them lived and died without ever tasting wine. Persia is in every respect a 'dry' country. But when a Persian drinks, he generally does so with the idea of getting totally intoxicated. The sin, he argues, is anyhow committed, therefore it is advisable to make the best of it. In some parts of Persia excellent wine is made, especially near Shiraz. Most of the Persian poets extol wine and praise the pleasures of revelry, but all these songs also admit of a mystical interpretation which makes them appear harmless.

Zahīr ad Daula's wife was a daughter of Nāsiraddīn Shah. I never saw her, but was on one occasion allowed to inquire after her health. This had to be looked upon as a great favour, and a sign of unusual intimacy. My wife, however, frequently visited the Princess and her daughters, one of whom was the most perfectly beautiful young woman she ever saw. This unfortunate young lady was, according to the custom then prevailing, not allowed to choose a husband, but was given away to a rich and stingy old man whom she never loved. Those who had married a daughter of the Shah were not supposed to contract other marriages at the same time. Polygamy on the whole was very rare.

CHAPTER III

LIFE IN TEHERAN—THE SHAH—HIS ANCESTORS—SEVERITY OF PUNISHMENTS—HIS DIARIES—NĀSIRADDĪN SHAH'S VIOLENT DEATH—ANGLO-RUSSIAN RIVALRY—SIR MORTIMER DURAND—THE GRAND VIZIER AMĪN-AS SULTĀN—HIS LIFE SAVED—HIS ULTIMATE VIOLENT DEATH

I MUST now say a few words about the *Ruler of Persia*, 'the Shah, son of a Shah, the King of Kings, the Great Chief, the Refuge of the World, the Shadow of God, Nāsiraddīn Shah Kādjār, may God exalt his rule and his sultanate!' These were the official titles. Nāsiraddīn Shah may be said to have been the last real 'Great King' in the style of Darius or Nūshīrvān. Although not over medium size, he was imposing and much respected. His expression when he drove through the town struck one as a mixture of pride and indifference. He always sat alone in his carriage, and when on horseback never allowed anyone to ride by his side. When receiving Europeans he would impress them by his air of dignity, as well as by his unexpected knowledge of other countries, especially their geography and history. He was always civil to the foreign representatives, to whom he spoke with the help of an interpreter, although he had a fairly good knowledge of French. But when alone with his Persian retainers, he would not hide his contempt for the Christian nations, or, at least, for their diplomatic agents. I have been told that when he was handed letters addressed to him by the Foreign Ministers he would ask: 'From whom is this letter?'—'From the

Italian Minister, may I be your Majesty's sacrifice!'—'I defile his father's grave' (*Gūr-i padar-ash*) would be the invariable answer the Shah would give, while throwing the letter on the floor. This he did to impress his subjects with his own superiority. But he never allowed any lack of consideration to be shown to any foreigner in his dominions.

The Shah used to keep between two hundred and three hundred wives. These were divided into *dastas*, or sections, and commanded by hideous black eunuchs. I sometimes caught a glimpse of these much envied and yet unfortunate royal prisoners, when they drove past me in their carriages and furtively lifted their veils. Most of them were of extraordinary beauty with delicate fair complexions, most attractive features and large black eyes. Their dark eyebrows were often artificially connected over the bridge of the nose. They were never allowed to visit any European, or to leave the harem unaccompanied by eunuchs. Trespassers would find a speedy and cruel death, and no one outside the Palace would ever hear of their end.

Nāsiraddīn Shah was passionately fond of hunting. He spent most of his time on shooting expeditions in the Alburz Mountains. On these occasions he was always accompanied by several 'sections' of his wives, and by a large retinue, as well as by his favourite or rather his *Mascotte* Azīz es Sultan, who was permitted familiarities otherwise impossible with the Shah. One of the pictures in this book shows the Shah resting in his hunting grounds and being read to, while the boy makes fun by presenting arms behind his back. The Shah's predilection for this child was occasioned by an incident during one of his expeditions. The Shah had sought shelter from the rain in the hut of a poor peasant woman, where he was much annoyed by the incessant crying of a baby, whom the mother had taken out of the hut. The Shah grew impatient and

NĀSIRADDĪN SHAH ON A SHOOTING EXPEDITION

rushed into the open to tell the woman to quiet her baby. At that moment the roof of the hut, consisting of brushwood with a heavy layer of clay over it, suddenly gave way and fell down with so vehement a crash, that it would probably have killed the Shah. The Shah took the infant boy, who in his opinion had saved his life, away with him and always kept him near his person. But when the hour of death, which is supposed to be fixed for every mortal, struck for Nāsiraddīn Shah, the presence of Azīz es Sultan in the mosque where the Shah was murdered did not save his royal master.

A royal visit would always be a time of great hardship for the district so honoured, because, according to an old custom, the unfortunate inhabitants were relentlessly put to contribution by the Shah's numerous followers. Saadi's words:

> 'If the King eats an apple from the garden of one of his subjects,
> His servants will pull the tree out with its roots;
> If the Sultan deems it lawful to take five eggs,
> His soldiers will put a thousand fowls on the spit,'

were still true at the time I was in Persia. These royal journeys greatly contributed to the state of abject poverty of the neighbourhood of the capital, and of many other districts rich in game. On one of my excursions I incidentally came to a district which showed unusual signs of prosperity. It was the wide and fertile valley of Tāliqān. I was surprised to see flourishing villages and farms and rich orchards and vineyards, well-kept roads for caravan traffic, well-built bridges over which I could ride without danger, whereas in most parts of the country it was advisable never to cross a bridge on horseback, but rather to ford the river. I met a venerable old Seyid (descendant of the Prophet Muhammed) and expressed to him my admiration for all these wonders. He was much pleased and gave me the explanation.

'When Nāsiraddīn Shah ascended the throne,' he said, 'we inhabitants of Tāliqān sent a deputation to

Teheran to express our allegiance to the new ruler, and to present him with a gift of 10,000 gold *tomāns*. This gift we were prepared to lay at the feet of His Majesty if he would graciously promise us on the sacred Koran never to set his blessed foot on the soil of our land. The Shah took the gift and kept his word, and this is the reason why Tāliqān is the most flourishing province in all the Shah's dominions. May Allah lengthen his life and make his reign glorious!'

In all other parts of Persia, roads, bridges and caravanserais were in a most dilapidated condition. It is true that many wealthy Persians have at all times devoted large sums to the building of caravanserais, bridges, wells, baths or other institutions of public utility. They did so mostly at an advanced stage of their lives, as an atonement for the sins of their younger days. But repairs were hardly ever made, and most of these buildings were in ruins. I was once asked which was the most marvellous thing I had seen in all my wanderings through Western Asia. It was a small avenue of trees that connected the town of Tripolis in Syria with the port. In this avenue, a tree which had withered had been replaced by a new one. People with some experience of the East have looked at me with incredulity when I told them of this strange fact. Nāsiraddīn Shah, especially after his visits to Europe, had actually built some fine roads, but these were not meant to serve his subjects. They did not connect towns and villages, but only led to the Shah's country seats and to his hunting grounds. One of these roads led across the three lofty ranges of the Alburz to the Caspian Sea. The descent from the high Kandavān Pass down the rocky and wild canyon of the Chālūs and through vast and dense virgin forests excited my admiration when I passed over it on one of my excursions. The head-man of the small village of Valiābād, whose inhabitants all claimed to be descendants of the Prophet and as such wore green turbans,

showed me, not without pride, a small tunnel through which the road passed, and a neatly built pavilion whence the eye could gaze upon the grand landscape, and upon the wild torrent that dashed from rock to rock. This road is called Hazār Cham—'a thousand windings'. Man and beast can pass over it with unusual ease and comfort. He told me the road had been built by a Tyrolese engineer, Gasteiger, on whom the Shah conferred the title of Khan in recognition of his services. I asked the village chief how it had been possible for Gasteiger Khan to have this work done by villagers who, being descendants of the Prophet, could not have been submitted to the occasional application of the bastinado, without which at that time no such arduous work could be carried out in Persia.

'Gasteiger Khan,' he answered, 'was a just and wise man, who was well aware of the respect due to those who wear the green turban. Whenever he saw the necessity of submitting a recalcitrant man to corporal punishment, he would gently remove the green turban from off the culprit's head and place it on a clean sheet. Then, when the man had received his due punishment, he would kiss the turban and respectfully replace it on the man's head, and the work would proceed for a time without difficulty.'

The Shah never invited the Diplomatic Corps to his Palace, only receiving their official congratulations on New Year's Day; the Persian New Year is the beginning of Spring, the 21st of March. But a big reception was held by the ladies of his harem, at the head of which was his favourite wife, Amīn-i-Aqdas. The ladies of the Diplomatic Corps used to attend these receptions. On New Year's Day the Shah would distribute little bags filled with gold or silver coins to his courtiers and ministers. Formerly these gifts represented a certain value, but latterly it had appeared more economical to strike false money for this purpose in the Royal Mint,

that is to say, the coins were still of gold or silver, but so thin that they had no currency. At the reception in the harem, however, the Shah would welcome the Diplomatic ladies and hand each one a gold *tomān* or double *tomān*. To this some of the ladies objected, and on one occasion, Lady Durand, wife of the British Minister who succeeded Sir Frank Lascelles, absolutely refused to attend the reception unless she could be sure that she would not be offered any money. The Shah having sent her the message that he would respect her feelings, she went to the Palace with my wife, whom she had asked to interpret for her, as she did not speak Persian. When the Shah saw her he went up to her, and asked her if she would accept his portrait as a New Year's gift. When Lady Durand said she would be delighted to have it, he gave her a gold double *tomān*, saying: 'You cannot refuse to accept my portrait which is on this coin. You must keep it as a souvenir.'

The founder of the Kadjar Dynasty was, strangely enough, a eunuch, Agha Muhammad Shah. His nephew, Fathali Shah, was a contemporary of the First Napoleon. He is said to have had a thousand wives, like Solomon, whom he was supposed by the Persians of his day to have equalled in splendour. His philo-progenitiveness was so great that at the time of his death his offspring numbered several hundred. At the time of my stay in Persia there were thousands of 'Imperial Princes and Princesses', many of whom filled very modest stations in life. When on a journey from Baghdad to Teheran I stopped at Kirmānshāh, almost all the telegraph clerks and petty officials in that city were Imperial Princes. In Baghdad I had engaged a Persian cook who was anxious to return to Kirmanshah, where he had left his wife, also a Princess. This lady was so grateful that I had brought her husband back to her, that she volunteered to wash all my linen, and also that of my retainers—a most useful offer which was gladly accepted.

She would take no money for this, so that I had to send her some stuffs, sugar-loaves and a few other little presents. She was so delighted with this that my cook came back beaming, announcing that her Imperial Highness had been graciously pleased to grant me the permission to inquire after her health.

Fathali Shah lost the Caucasian provinces of his vast Empire in two wars with the Russians. He lost them partly owing to his stinginess, not being willing to contribute to the expenses of the war which was conducted on the Persian side by his son, Abbas Mirza, Governor of the invaded provinces. He declared the war to be a local affair that only concerned that province. Abbas Mirza having died during his father's lifetime, his son Muhammad Shah succeeded Fathali Shah. In 1848 his son, Nāsiraddīn Shah, ascended the throne. His reign lasted fifty lunar years. In the beginning he was much troubled with the Babi sedition, a movement from which the sect of the Bahais has sprung, and ultimately spread even to America. The Babi revolt was suppressed with indescribable cruelty. In later years the Shah grew more humane, probably under the influence of Western civilization. But he nevertheless did not shrink from killing people whom he did not want, besides real criminals. While I was in Teheran one of his lesser servants had despoiled the famous Peacock Throne of some of its jewels. A friend of mine witnessed the execution of the culprit in a square adjoining the Palace Garden. The Shah was standing behind the railing, partly hidden by bushes, and told the executioner to cut the man's throat as he would that of a sheep. While this was being done my friend saw the tiger eyes of the Shah and heard him repeat in a hoarse whisper: '*Sar-ash bibur, tamām-ash bibur!*'—'Cut off his head, cut it off entirely.' This command was then carried out with a knife.

In most cases, it was only in the first moments of anger that the Shah would have a man put to death.

This was generally done by strangulation by the attendants, one of whom would unwind the shawl, which served him as a belt, for the purpose. In the earlier days of Nāsiraddīn Shah's reign, mutilation was not infrequently resorted to as a punishment. If the culprit had time and presence of mind enough to make a good money offer, the punishment might be converted into a fine. I have heard the tale told that once the Shah had ordered a courtier's ears to be cut off for trying to listen to things that were not his business. The unfortunate man after this operation disappeared for some time from the 'Blissful Presence', as the term was. But after a while he began attending Court functions, gradually venturing nearer and nearer to his august master. One day the Shah, whose wrath had long since evaporated, noticed him and nodded to him benignly: 'Ah, I remember. Didn't I have your ears cut off some time ago? Just remove the fur cap from your head; I should like to see what you look like without ears.' This order was obeyed reluctantly, the man pointing out that it was not respectful to appear before the King of Kings with a bare head. (In fact, this is quite against Persian etiquette.) But His Majesty insisted. When the lambskin cap was removed, it became evident that the ears were not missing, but had only suffered a small diminution which might easily be concealed by the culprit's hair and headgear. The Shah was furious. 'Who is the son of a dog who does his work in such a slovenly and incompetent way? I shall teach my servants to obey my orders. Strangle him!'

The other courtiers all tried to intervene and to calm the Shah's anger. One of them said: 'After all, Refuge of the World, man is but flesh.'

'What do you mean by that?' said the Shah.

'Well, may I be your sacrifice, and may my days be shortened, so as to be added to those of your Majesty! Of course the man in his plight offered a bribe to him

who was to mutilate him. Such a proceeding is within the limits of human nature.'

'How much did he give him?' asked the Shah, whose curiosity in the business transaction was getting the better of his indignation.

'A hundred *tomāns*,' was the reply.

'What fools you all are!' said the Shah. 'If he had offered me ten *tomāns*, I should have left his ears intact altogether.'

I cannot guarantee this tale to be absolutely true, but it is, in any case, characteristic of Persian customs of the early days of Nāsiraddīn Shah's reign.

After his journeys in Europe the Shah became more and more humane, and tried to instil the knowledge of Farangistān (Europe) and Western ideas in the minds of his subjects. He published the diaries of his three journeys to Europe, and also of a journey in his own dominions. These books, which I possess, are very curious. They were written in exactly the same style as the Shah used in speaking, and gave one, at first sight, the impression of being rather naïve. But they show that the Imperial writer had an open eye for new things, and a sound judgment. Let me here give my readers one specimen, the description of the London Fire Brigade:

'The English Fire-Brigade.'

'To-day, before seeing the Ministers and others, the English Fire-Brigade came, and in the garden in front of our palace went through their exercise. They planted ladders, with the supposition that the upper floor of the palace was on fire; they mounted these ladders with perfect celerity and agility, and brought down people who were burnt, half burnt, or unharmed, some taken on their shoulders, and others let down by ropes made fast round their waists.

'They have invented beautiful means of saving men. But the wonder is in this, that on the one hand they take such trouble and originate such appliances for the salvation of man from death, when, on the other hand, in the armouries, arsenals and workshops of Woolwich in England, and of Krupp in Germany, they contrive fresh engines, such as cannons, muskets, projectiles and similar things, for the quicker and more multitudinous slaughter of the human race. He whose invention destroys man more surely and expeditiously prides himself thereon, and obtains decorations of honour.'

Nāsiraddīn's end was a tragic one. A revolutionary movement had developed during the last years of his reign, directed by a mysterious Afghan, Shaikh Jamāladdīn, who lived in Constantinople. One of this man's followers had suffered great wrongs at the hand of the Shah's son, then Governor of Teheran, and had resolved to kill this Prince. But Shaikh Jamāladdīn pointed out to him that this would be useless in so far as it would change nothing in the condition of Persia. It would be better to kill the Shah who was responsible for the lack of justice in his country. This ghastly plan was carried out in the beginning of May, 1896. It was the eve of the Shah's jubilee, and the whole country was preparing unusual festivities to celebrate the rare event of a reign of fifty (lunar) years. Wonderful illuminations of the Royal Palace and of the whole capital; gifts to the poor; receptions were to take place, and invitations were issued. On the day that preceded these planned festivities, the Shah had felt the wish to worship at the Shrine of Shah Abdulazīm in the same golden-domed mosque which I had some time before visited, disguised as a Persian. When the throng of the people pushed up too close to the Shah, he said to his followers: 'Let the people all come as near as they like to-day. Do not hold them back.' One man held out a petition which he apparently tried to hand to the Shah. It was the assassin. He had hidden a revolver under the paper and shot the Shah right in the heart. Death was almost instantaneous. He was only heard to mutter: 'Grand Vizier, I entrust Persia to you.' The Grand Vizier Amīn-as Sultān showed admirable presence of mind and energy on that day. He had the Shah carried into a private room before anybody could tell whether he was severely hurt or not, and then placed the dead body in his carriage in a sitting position, so that when he drove back to town everybody thought the Shah was alive and not severely wounded. Then the Grand Vizier gave out

that the Shah was quite well, and at the same time had all *Lutis* (bad characters) arrested and put into prison. Besides this, he placed two Cossacks at every baker's shop, so as to force the bakers to continue baking bread until the people should want no more. He knew that all riots in Persia begin with a panic, and a consequent dearth of bread. While there is bread to be had, nobody thinks the situation dangerous. 'If the people of Teheran like to eat stale bread for a fortnight, let them have it,' said he. Only after all these precautions had been taken did the Grand Vizier wire to the Heir Apparent, then Governor of Tabrīz, and make the Shah's death known all over the country.

That afternoon we were at a garden party at the Russian Legation, which, as I have said, was then situated in the inner town. The Russian Minister was afraid his guests might be in danger passing through crowded bazaars, and gave each of us two mounted Cossacks to see us safely home. But all was tranquil and remained so. I had frequent opportunities of seeing the Grand Vizier during these critical days. Invariably I had to admire the calm circumspection with which he managed all the affairs. The universal impression was that, since more than a hundred years, Persia had not been as well governed as immediately after Nāsiraddīn Shah's assassination. When after much delay the new Shah, Muzaffaraddīn, arrived in the capital, things began to go much less smoothly.

The affairs of Persia grew more and more difficult as time went on—the external political situation as well as the conditions of the interior administration. Two great and powerful neighbours, Russia and England, were exercising a constant pressure on that backward and medieval empire. This pressure kept Persia for a long time in its position, just as the bricks of a vault will hold the keystone by equal pressure from both sides. But it was when this pressure began to become

uneven, that Persia's situation grew dangerous. Russia was continually expanding in Central Asia. Neither friendly representations nor menaces nor treaties could stop Russian encroachments. One might as well draw a pencil line on a bit of blotting-paper to stop an oil stain from spreading. During the years of my sojourn in Persia, British diplomacy would offer a certain resistance, but, on the whole, Russia would appear stronger and more dangerous to her Asiatic neighbours than England, including her vast Indian Empire. An English diplomat at that time attributed that unsatisfactory state of things to Lord Salisbury's obstinate refusal to give an instruction for an emergency. Russian encroachments at times reached such a pitch that it seemed difficult to understand the long-suffering patience of England's statesmen and public opinion. For more than twenty years it was an undisputed axiom that a war between England and Russia was only a question of time. If anyone between 1885 and 1905 had expressed a doubt as to the certainty of an Anglo-Russian armed conflict, he would have been looked upon as a hopeless fool in matters of foreign politics. If, on the other hand, he professed to foresee the imminent outbreak of hostilities, his perspicacity and foresight would be recognized. As is often the case, both views were wrong and were also right. There has not been a war between Russia and England, but there has been a war between Russia and England's new ally Japan. Defeated Russia dropped her overbearing ways for a time, and consented to come to terms with England on Persian and other Central Asiatic questions. This agreement was ultimately signed in 1907. From that time onwards until the middle of the Great War, England supported Russian policy in Northern Persia, and shut her eyes to Russia's overstepping the lines drawn to her expansion by that agreement. Russia's method was to hinder any real progress in Persia, and to debar her from every chance

of prosperity. When the Persian Government engaged an American gentleman of high financial capacity, Mr. Morgan Shuster, to reform Persian finance, Russia demanded the dismissal of this successful adviser, England joined in Russia's representations and thereby forced Mr. Morgan Shuster to abandon his task and the no longer independent Persian Empire. England had sacrificed Persia to the purely imaginary danger of German political activity in that country.

But I have allowed myself to be carried beyond the period when I was a resident in Teheran, and have spoken of things of which I was not an eye-witness. I must return to my narrative.

As long as Nāsiraddīn Shah lived, the fiction of an Anglo-Russian equilibrium was maintained. This line was very ably followed by Sir Frank Lascelles, who diminished the effect of Russian local successes by his not altogether feigned indifference. At the same time he avoided continuing the method of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff in creating new British economic interests in the country. He followed the old traditional lines of British tactics, and did nothing that could wake up the sleeping dogs of political intrigue. When, in 1893, he was recalled from Persia to fill the important post of Ambassador in St. Petersburg, and soon after in Berlin, it must have been difficult for his Government to replace him. A successor was ultimately found in Sir Mortimer Durand, a man who undoubtedly had certain qualifications for his new post. American readers will remember that Sir Mortimer Durand was British Ambassador to the United States up till 1905, and those who knew him at Washington will, no doubt, appreciate his qualities as a man and a diplomat. I had known him and Lady Durand in India in 1886–7, and we had become friends. He was at that time Foreign Secretary for India. To him were confided the many complicated relations of the Anglo-Indian Government with the Native States of

India and with her neighbouring countries, Tibet, Afghanistan, and others. He had made a special study of Persian, which was a sort of State language of India as well as the official language of Afghanistan. He had great, and perhaps unique, experience in dealing with Asiatic rulers, and was much aided by his imposing appearance and naturally dignified ways. All this made me expect that he would be equally successful as British Minister in Persia, and I was much surprised when I gradually noticed that this was by no means the case. The Persians did not like his ways, although it flattered them that he could speak with them in their own language. They found that perhaps he had lorded it too much over Indian Princes and Viziers, and thought him haughty. His reserve, which was due more to shyness than to haughtiness, made them suspicious. But what most shook the confidence of many Persians in Sir Mortimer was that soon after his arrival he discarded the services of the old advisers of the British Legation, and followed new men whose knowledge and experience were not on a par with their spirit of enterprise and their ambition. This led Sir Mortimer, probably against his will, into siding with certain Persian political factions which, under the mask of patriotic motives, were only seeking their own profit and advancement. The first thing these new men strove to bring about was the fall of the Grand Vizier Amīn-as Sultān. He was replaced by Prince Farmān-Farmā and banished to Kashan.

As soon as the Grand Vizier was safely out of the way, his enemies worked by all available means for his destruction. One day, I learned on good authority that an order to kill him had been extracted from the weak Shah, and that one of the chief courtiers was entrusted with this ignominious task. I was resolved to try everything to save a man whom I had known for years as a wise statesman, and who had become my friend. As I left the German Legation, I met Sir Mortimer Durand

on horseback in the street. I told him I thought it would be a disgrace for all the European representatives if we looked on without stirring, at the crime that was about to be perpetrated. I was well aware that Sir Mortimer Durand was an adversary of Amīn-as Sultān, but I knew I would not appeal in vain to his sense of honour and his humane disposition. I said that only the English and the Russian Ministers had enough influence to make successful representations to the Shah, and that all other foreign representatives had nothing to say. He admitted that, but objected that whatever the British Minister might propose would unquestionably be thwarted by the Russians, and that would only make matters worse for Amīn-as Sultān. I then proposed to Sir Mortimer that he should go at once to the Russian Minister, M. de Butzow, and ask him to join him in these steps. I did not think that his Russian colleague could well refuse. After a few moments' hesitation Sir Mortimer said: 'Well, I will try,' and he rode forthwith straight to the Russian Legation. In the afternoon he told me he had found M. de Butzow only too willing to intercede on behalf of Amīn-as Sultān, but that he had been held back by the fear that his steps would be thwarted by the English. The two Ministers immediately resolved to go together to the Shah, who was mightily impressed by the joint action of the representatives of the rival Powers. The Grand Vizier's life was saved, and later on he was reinstated in his office and promoted by Muzaffaraddīn Shah, his would-be murderer, to the dignity of Atabeg, the highest title in Persia. I do not know whether Amīn-as Sultān ever heard of my intercession for him, but he always remained my friend until he was ultimately murdered in 1909, in Teheran, whither he had returned after a long journey to try to put an end to the anarchy then prevailing in the country. He was shot by so-called patriots, to whom he appeared to be reactionary.

CHAPTER IV

Friends in Persia—Miss Gertrude Bell—Junior Members of the Staff of the British Legation.

I HAVE often wondered what it is that leaves one with a feeling of sympathy for a place one has lived in, where one has not been spared the unavoidable troubles and worries, more than in other places which one remembers with indifference. In the case of Persia, my recollections are connected with many interesting experiences in so far as that country was the object of my studies. But, apart from this, if our memory recalls good friends whose company we have enjoyed, I think we like to look back upon those periods of our lives and on the places in which we knew them. Nowhere have I had so many good friends or known so many people worth knowing as in Persia. Had it not been for this great advantage, the eight years I had to stay at Teheran would have seemed tedious and difficult to bear. As it is, they were, on the whole, happy years, and the friendships I made or renewed during that time were lasting ones.

The person who was foremost among my friends in Persia has since attained much recognition, and her fame will outlive those who have known her. It is Gertrude Bell.

Miss Gertrude Bell came to Teheran with her uncle and aunt, Sir Frank and Lady Lascelles and their daughter Florence, who was at that time seventeen years old. Their arrival was quite an event, and brought a great change into our somewhat monotonous existence. The

two girls were full of life and interest. They embodied *la joie de vivre* and imparted it to every one who came within their orbit. In large centres the members of the Diplomatic Corps meet only at more or less official functions and sometimes hardly know one another. In smaller places they meet almost every day, in Teheran they met about three times a day. We would ride all over Shimran at the foot of the Alburz Mountains, and visit every village and explore every gorge formed by a stream of clear water running down from the snows.

Sir Frank always joined these expeditions, and took a lively interest in the information I was able to give about the different summer residences of the Shah and other Persian grandees. We often had tea or a moonlight picnic in beautiful gardens, whose gates were hospitably opened to European visitors. It was a pleasant change from the arid brown hills we rode over, to sit under large elm trees by the edge of a stream of water, made to flow along the garden in a channel tiled with turquoise-coloured slabs, and to listen to the song of the nightingales, or watch a kingfisher dive into a pool of clear water.

Both Miss Bell and Miss Lascelles began learning to read and to write Persian, as well as to converse in that language. The studies of the secretaries of the English Legation were much stimulated by this fair competition. I remember a tea picnic in one of the gardens, when Gertrude Bell and Henry Cadogan had climbed on to a gate in order to read an ode of Hafiz, undisturbed by the conversation of the other guests. They shouted to me to join them, and asked me to explain certain passages which the teachings of the *Munshi* had not made clear. The main difficulty was caused by the Arabic verses which are sometimes interpolated in the Persian text. It was a pleasure to see with what joy and enthusiasm they appreciated the beauty of rhyme and rhythm, when once the Arabic verses were explained.

Some years later, Gertrude Bell published an exquisite rendering of a selection from the 'Divan of Hafiz' in English verse. Her translation recalls the original so vividly, that it almost makes one forget the free use she made of the well-known German translation of von Rosenzweig-Schwannau. It is curious to think that at that time Persian came easier to her than Arabic, whilst during the latter part of her life she had a rare proficiency in Arabic, and had to give up her early Persian studies. But that was mainly due to circumstances. While she was in Persia, she struggled hard over her Persian with Sheikh Hassan. Of this curious man she gives an amusing account in her *Persian Pictures*, which I can testify is quite correct, because I also read with Sheikh Hassan and knew him well.

It was a lucky coincidence for me that I was *Chargé d'Affaires*, and consequently my own master, during, I think, the whole time of her stay in the Persian capital. This enabled me to do all my work in the early morning hours, and be free for social gatherings and expeditions from noon to bed-time. I had leased a house and garden in the Shimran district in the village of Gulahek, which a former Shah had presented to the English Government. This house was adjacent to the summer residence of the British Minister, with buildings for him and his family, as well as for the Chancery and all the members of the Legation. The secretaries had their meals with their chief, who was granted a special allowance for this purpose, as originally it would have been difficult for them to cater for themselves. In consequence of this arrangement, the staff of the English Legation formed, as it were, one large family. If you add to this the very wide hospitality which the Lascelles and some other diplomats extended to most of the European residents and to the many Persians of rank, you will get an appropriate idea of the social life in Teheran in those days.

Of the English secretaries, I have mentioned Henry

BĀGH-I-FIRDOUS, GARDEN OF PARADISE, PERSIAN COUNTRY HOUSE IN SHIMRĀN

Cadogan. He was very unconventional, and therefore not popular among his colleagues. I think that, apart from Sir Frank and Lady Lascelles, my wife and I were the only people who liked him. He had a select little library, which he liked to show to his visitors. One day he showed Grant Duff, one of his fellow-secretaries, a row of beautifully bound favourite authors, saying: 'Now these are all my old friends.' Grant Duff unfortunately picked up a volume which was not cut, and pertly remarked: 'Very nice of you not to cut your old friends.'

This was a mere mishap, for he really read most of his books. Among these there were the four volumes of Renan's *Histoire du peuple d'Israel.* Lady Lascelles was so full of this remarkable book that she made me read it too. It was quite a revelation. I read it most carefully, because I had a vague idea of writing a book to prove that the Jews of the Dispersion were mainly descendants of the Phœnicians, not of the Israelites. The idea was not mine, but my father's, who, however, died before he could write it. When I had finished reading the book I asked Cadogan whether he would not sell it to me, as most likely he would not want to read it a second time. But the idea that he might appear less interested in such studies than myself seemed to annoy him, so I dropped the subject.

Cadogan was very musical and would listen to my wife's piano playing with quite as much musical understanding and knowledge as Sir Frank. He would often spend the evening with us, listening to the works of Bach, Chopin or Wagner. At other times he would bring a book and read to us. Sometimes it would be a book of German poetry which he knew and appreciated. He would be furious if anyone else dropped in and interrupted the music or the reading. To prevent such interruptions, he would give instructions to the guard at our door to tell visitors we were not at home. This would occasionally happen to people whom we had

invited. When the American Minister, Mr. Truxton Beale, found out how it happened that he was always sent away from our door, he was on the point of assaulting Cadogan in the street, and talked of shooting him, while Cadogan, on the other hand, prepared to have recourse to his pugilistic capabilities. My intervention may have prevented bloodshed.

His colleagues found him cool, but they saw only one side of his personality. In reality he was most generous, and would have given away anything he thought some one else would like to have.

One day we received by diplomatic bag a thing of unheard-of value in Persia, a ham! Cadogan appreciated this rare delicacy not only with his palate, but also with the sensations of a true epicure. The day after he had tasted it he wrote to my wife that he felt too dejected to go down to dinner that night. Would she be good enough to lend him her ham for a couple of days? Some days later the bone of the ham reappeared and could still be used for making pea soup. We were more amused than annoyed, and supposed that he would have lent his ham if he had had one, and if we had asked for the loan of it.

When Sir Frank Lascelles was appointed Ambassador at St. Petersburg, Cadogan happened to be on a trip to Isfahan. There he learnt the news through the service of the Indo-European Telegraph. He at once wired to Lascelles: 'Ruth i. verse 16, Cadogan.' The passage was looked up in the Bible and read: 'Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge.'

Cadogan's wish to follow his chief to Russia was not to be fulfilled. He caught a serious chill while trout-fishing in the icy waters of the Lar River. He died in his tent within a few days, notwithstanding all Dr. Odling's efforts. A friend brought his body wrapped

up in tenting to Gulahek. We all followed his coffin on horseback to the unspeakably dreary cemetery near Teheran. It would have been better, I think, to have buried him at the foot of the rock of *Chihil Chashma*, the 'Forty Springs,' where he died, and where the English camping-ground used to be. At all events, that would have been in harmony with his own poetical ideas.

Sadly enough, I afterwards bought Renan's *Histoire du peuple d'Israel* at an auction where Cadogan's belongings were sold. I have it still, and have made much use of it for my book on the Jews and the Phœnicians, of which I shall have more to say.

Grant Duff now took Cadogan's place. He was a very different type of man from his unfortunate colleague. I had gone over to the English Chancery at 6 a.m. after the news of Cadogan's death had reached Gulahek, to help Grant Duff to write and despatch all the obituary announcements. I found him already at work and admired the energy with which he fulfilled his sad duty. I gradually got to like him better than I had thought possible while Cadogan was still alive.

One fine spring morning Grant Duff and I started on an expedition into the remotest parts of the Alburz Mountains, where we hoped to shoot bears. The Persian bear is very large and has a beautiful shiny coat, but he is a wily animal and seldom appears at these shooting parties. Our camp lay on a crest of the Kandavān Mountains, just on the border of the great forest of Māzandarān. The whole hill was covered with luxuriant herbs and flowering shrubs. It was this that attracted the bears in spring-time, for these animals are more vegetarian than carnivorous, and will browse just like cows. Although traces were to be seen all around our camping-place, we did not sight a single bear, and ultimately had to give up the hope of finding one. I did not like to stay away from my post too long, as I was then *Chargé d'Affaires* and had no one to replace

me. As we descended into the valley of the Lourā River our guide pointed to a rocky hill inside which he said there was an ice cave. With the help of candles we penetrated into the deep cave, partly walking on trunks of wild cypress trees, which had been placed there to span a deep chasm. At the end the cleft in the rock widened into what looked to us like a chapel. The columns were made of clear and transparent ice, and the walls were covered with ice crystals. The columns were a wonderful sight when candles were held behind them. The people say this ice only forms in the summer and melts in the winter. This is looked upon as a miracle, and the cave is considered a sanctuary. Its name is *Yakhchāl Murāt*—'ice cave'—but it also bears the name of a saint who, of course, belongs to the family of Ali, the great national saint.

Riding along the picturesque banks of the Lourā we saw in many places a kind of slide, on which sheaves of the mountain plant *kumā* were rolled down the steep mountain side to the bottom of the valley. This umbelliferous plant attains the considerable height of six feet or more. Its thick, hollow and juicy stalks have quite an agreeable taste, resembling that of dill. When cut before its last blossoms are out, it makes excellent fodder for sheep, and is preserved for this purpose during the winter. We saw many very fine and at the same time strong-looking young girls occupied in cutting and transporting *kumā*. They carry the sheaves on their heads to their villages, and heap them up in high stacks on the flat roofs of their houses. The sheep are mostly kept in huge caves gradually dug out of the mountain-side against which the houses are leaning. This is done to protect them against the avalanches by which the houses are menaced and sometimes destroyed when the snows begin to melt.

At the time when we passed another night at the village of Shahristanak, the snow had melted on most of

the open spaces exposed to the sun, but lay many yards deep in the ravines. We wanted to find a new way back to Gulahek, and were told that we might cross over the western shoulder of the Touchāl Mountain by making use of the snow that filled its deep ravines. Less frightened of the *bahman*, or avalanches, than the villagers, we ventured on this new path. But when we came to the first of these ravines we noticed that the water had partly washed away the snow underneath, so that we had to cross a huge snow bridge. As we went on, every new ravine seemed undermined by the water to a greater extent than the preceding ones, and the last bridges looked very thin and risky to cross. Having, however, gone so far, and thinking we must be near Gulahek, we dismounted and led our horses over these bridges by the bridle without a mishap. When we had left the snow region behind us and were pushing forwards towards the villages of Shimran, we both decided never to ride across a bridge of melting snow again.

I never saw Grant Duff again after his departure from Persia. His last post was that of British Minister in Berne.

During the eight years of my stay in Persia there were naturally constant changes among the junior members of all the Legations and new friends had to take the place of old ones. All these young men I remember as cheerful and congenial colleagues. But only one of them, Horace Rumbold, have I met again in later years. I had met him on the occasion of a short visit I paid to Cairo in 1905, and recently I had the pleasure of seeing Sir Horace Rumbold as British Ambassador in Berlin where his and Lady Rumbold's popularity appear to be of a lasting character.

CHAPTER V

ORIENTAL STUDIES—HISTORY OF THE LAST TWO CENTURIES—SIR E. DENISON ROSS—A MODERN PERSIAN COLLOQUIAL GRAMMAR—GERMAN AND ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF OMAR KHAYYÁM

I MUST here say a few words about my Persian studies. My familiarity with Arabic was a great help to me, because almost all abstract words used in modern Persian are of Arabic extraction. I read in course of time all the books I could get hold of on modern history. Many of these books only existed in manuscript and had never been printed. However, some of the most interesting and important manuscripts were not to be found at Teheran. I had to read them, when on leave, in the Library of the British Museum in London. Gradually I began to understand how it had been possible that the mighty Persian Empire had been overthrown by a handful of Afghan warriors in 1722, when Isfahan, the great capital, was besieged and taken and the King and all the Royal Princes bereft either of their eyesight or of their lives; and how a nomad chief sprang up as the saviour of his country and was ultimately proclaimed King under the title of Nādir Shah, who led the victorious Persian armies across the Euphrates, the Oxus and the Indus; and how, after this great conqueror's assassination in 1747, different pretenders fought for the supreme power which in the end was won by the Chief of the Kadjars, the then ruling dynasty. The past helps to understand the present: history is the foundation of politics. For some time I had the idea

of writing a book on the history of Persia during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but I found that such a task would take up too much of my time.

During my studies in the Manuscript Department of the British Museum I made the acquaintance of a young Orientalist who was similarly engaged upon historical research. It was Mr. (now Sir) E. Denison Ross. We soon made friends and have remained so ever since. I owe Sir Denison a great debt of gratitude for his help and advice when I was working at the publication of an old manuscript of Omar Khayyám's quatrains. As head of the School of Oriental Studies in London, he has done very useful work, not only as a teacher of Persian and Arabic but also by publishing a number of remarkable articles and books on different subjects of Oriental science.

The only book I wrote during my stay in Persia was a Modern Persian Colloquial Grammar. I had been asked to write something of that kind by my English friends, and consequently I wrote it in English. It was published in 1898 by Messrs. Luzac & Co., in London. When the first copies arrived in Teheran, I asked the manager of the only European store whether he would sell it. He asked to have a look at it first, and then told me the next day that it was not a fit article to be sold in Persia! Nevertheless, it has helped many a newcomer to learn the language without too much trouble, and has sold very well. It has been out of print for some time.

In my leisure hours I frequently read the verses of the great Persian poets, Firdousi, Omar Khayyám, Rūmi, Saadi, Hafiz and many others. Although all these poets lived in the Middle Ages, they appeared quite modern in a country in which a thousand years had wrought but little change. Persia is a nation of poets, and all classes down to muleteers and housemaids quote and delight in verses of Saadi and Hafiz.

Nowhere does the spirit of the ages appeal so much to a man as when he travels on horseback through a country of ancient civilization. One day in December I had gone with a friend to the confines of the Great Salt Desert, which covers a considerable part of Central Persia, where we knew gazelle abounded. I had seen this part of the Salt Desert on my first ride across Persia. I have previously mentioned that a large salt lake had since then been formed which covered the caravan track I had followed, so that now travellers had to take another route. Riding across the desolate plain on the north side of the lake we came upon an old caravanserai, parts of which were in ruins. We made this our headquarters, and discovered a fairly well preserved chamber on the upper floor. Here we found some protection against the cold after we had suspended our travelling rugs as curtains in front of the frameless windows. Wandering through the ruins we came upon some men sitting in a small chamber in the courtyard. They were nomads of the Shahsevenn tribe, who like ourselves had gone there to shoot gazelle. They were squatting on the floor listening to their *Ilbegi*, or chief, who was reading to them the old legends out of Firdousi's 'Shāhnāma', the great epic poem of the Persians, written about a thousand years ago. The room was lit, and at the same time warmed, by burning one after the other small dry bushes of camel-thorn, one of the few shrubs that grow in that desert. The *Ilbegi* welcomed us and we arranged that we should go to the chase the next morning under his guidance. He told us that the caravanserai had been built by Shah Sanjar, the Saljuk. As that monarch ascended the throne during Omar Khayyám's lifetime, I thought it quite possible that the poet whose quatrains are still celebrated all over the East, and known through FitzGerald's paraphrase in all English-speaking countries, had sojourned there on one of his frequent journeys from Nishapur to Isfahan.

THE TOWER OF SILENCE NEAR TEHERAN

The chase was as successful as it was interesting. We followed all the instructions of our nomad friends, who knew the country and the habits of the game. Without them we could not have got near a gazelle. We made great friends with the chief men of these Shahsevenn. They came to Teheran some time afterwards, to return our visit. They were grateful for the way we had treated them, and for the little presents we were able to give them. When, some years later, I passed on my journey from Baghdad to Teheran, near the Salt Lake one of my pack-animals fell and died, so that the load had to be left in a desolate part of the road with one man to guard it. I had given up the hope of seeing my things again, when late at night I heard voices outside the hostelry and found that the Shahsevenn tribe had, on hearing my name, supplied a fresh animal and brought my goods to me. They would not hear of accepting any money for what they called 'fulfilling the law of friendship'.

Ever since my visits to Shah Sanjar's old caravanserai I was more than ever haunted by the peculiar charm of Omar Khayyám's verses and I began to translate them into German verse. They were first published in 1909 and have since been reprinted five times. Recently a popular edition of my translation has been issued by the well-known Insel-Verlag in Leipzig. In 1921 I came across an old manuscript of 330 of Omar's quatrains and soon after I was given a copy of a newly discovered still older fragment of thirteen quatrains. These are the oldest undoubtedly genuine specimens of 'The Rubāiyāt'. I made a Persian edition, to be used in Persia, India and other Oriental countries.

At the request of my publisher, I have written an English prose translation of the Persian verses, which is now in the press. I am fully aware that nothing can compete with FitzGerald's beautiful paraphrase, and it is by no means my intention to attempt it.

My translation is meant to give those who take an interest in Omar Khayyám's personality, an insight into his real ideas, as far as this is possible.

Quite recently a hitherto unknown Persian book by Omar Khayyám has been discovered and acquired by the Prussian State Library in Berlin. An account of this very curious little book which throws unexpected light on Omar Khayyám's personality and ideas, will be found in my *Quatrains of Omar Khayyám*, published by Messrs. Methuen & Co., Ltd., London, 1930.

CHAPTER VI

Official Side of my Life in Persia—A Severe Epidemic of Cholera—Information given me by the British Legation—Fate of a Dispatch—The Emperor's Telegram to Kruger—Cecil Rhodes and the Kaiser

MY Persian studies, however, always remained a secondary occupation. I resorted to them only in my leisure hours.

In the spring of 1892, Baron Schenck had gone on leave and was appointed Minister in Pekin. After a short interregnum I became *Chargé d'Affaires* and found myself responsible for all the doings of the German Legation. The first thing I did was to give unlimited leave to the Persian Munshi or scribe, to spend as much time as he liked on pilgrimages to the sacred shrine of Shāhzāda Abdulazīm, whither he would be drawn by devotion or, maybe, by metal more attractive. For it was said that these pilgrimages afforded the only opportunity for the sexes to meet outside the bonds of wedlock. This left me to do alone what work there was to be done, as there was no other official attached to the Legation. I found that I could get through it all within the morning hours, seldom doing office work after lunch; whereas at the time when the staff was complete, the work had been doubled and trebled owing to the presence of men who knew very little about the country and wanted things explained, or Persian letters translated. Now, however, I could quietly read the notes of the Persian Government myself and write the answers in Persian, as I thought best. I could also sign the

political reports I wrote, whereas before it had been necessary to give my chief long explanations before he would sign them. This state of affairs, so satisfactory to me, lasted for sixteen months, until a new Minister was appointed to Teheran.

Yet the first months of that period were to be among the most terrible of my life. A violent epidemic of cholera had broken out and thrown the whole country into dismay and disorder. The service of post horses used by travellers was suspended, and communication with Europe and most parts of Persia was interrupted. I was expecting a visit from my brother, an artillery officer who had obtained leave for a journey to Persia. I went to meet him at the *chapar* station of Yangi Imām, leaving two relays of my own horses at intermediate stations. When we met, we rode through the night as fast as we could, for I felt nervous at leaving my wife alone at such a time in the village of Dizāshub, our summer residence in the Shimran district. When we arrived at breakfast-time, my wife received us apparently quite well, and we gaily discussed all the details of an expedition to the valley of the Lar River at the foot of Damavand. But in the afternoon she complained of feeling tired, and had to lie down. She developed a high temperature, so I sent to the British Legation for Dr. Odling, who lived at Gulahek, a couple of miles from our house. He said it was the beginning of some serious illness, not, however, cholera. To our great dismay it was a bad case of small-pox, an illness which may be called endemic among the Persians. Dr. Odling advised me to ask a young English lady, Miss Norah Neame, the sister of a telegraph official, whether she would help me to nurse my wife. I sent a horse with a side-saddle with my letter to her, and she appeared very soon afterwards, ready to nurse any illness except cholera. As there were no professional nurses in Persia, this proved a great help and comfort to me. After ten

anxious days my wife at last showed signs of recovery, but was, of course, exceedingly weak and hardly able to sit up in bed for more than a few minutes. During this time, cholera had spread to our village, where the inhabitants suffered severe losses. More than one-third of them lost their lives. The dead, according to Muhammedan custom, were washed before being shrouded and buried. These ghastly ablutions took place on a plank thrown across a stream which supplied our house and garden with water, and which flowed immediately outside our wall and at the back of my wife's bedroom. It was difficult to explain to her why so much chanting took place all day long at the back of the house. I did all I could to hinder our Persian servants and soldiers drinking the infected water which filled our tanks and the ponds in our garden. In vain did I try to explain to them what we know about microbes in unboiled water, and entreat them to quench their thirst with tea or with a concoction made up of boiled water and cinnamon. Their fatalism, and more especially their belief that the hour of death had been fixed for every individual on the 'Day of Beginningless Eternity', prevailed over any reasoning. Yet none of my servants, and only two soldiers of my guard, were taken ill. These poor fellows died refusing the dose of whisky out of Dr. Odling's flask which might have saved them. They preferred to die as they had lived, as true believers, and would not burden themselves with sin at the gate of eternity.

My wife's much enfeebled constitution could not withstand the infection, and despite all the precautions we had taken she was seized with this dreadful illness. It is impossible for me, even now, to talk of the sudden change wrought in her appearance within a few hours after the first signs of infection, nor of the serious apprehensions of the doctor when he saw her. I will only record the courage and devotion shown by Miss Neame when she unhesitatingly decided to stay on and relieve

me from nursing when nature made a rest of a few hours imperative. It was little short of a miracle that my wife was spared. But Dr. Odling was right when he warned me not to be too optimistic for another ten or twelve days. Her recovery made visible progress only after it had been possible to move her to another house in the same garden, but where we could not hear the chanting of the interminable funeral processions.

In the meantime, I had sent my brother alone on the planned expedition, he believing that my wife was out of danger and well on the road to recovery. He ascended Mount Damavand and thoroughly enjoyed the feat. When he heard that my wife had cholera, he hurried home and helped me to carry her to the other house. His optimism and courage were a great comfort to me, especially when the population of the village began to show signs of fanaticism and open hostility, no doubt caused by my objection to their washing the infected corpses in my drinking water.

When, at last, my wife was able to sit in a chair on the verandah, my brother expressed a hope that he might have at least one ride with her before the end of his leave would oblige him to return home. This seemed impossible, as she could not yet walk a step, and had to be carried from her bed to her chair. But this did not discourage him. 'If you can sit on a chair, you can sit in your saddle on a quiet horse,' he said. His wish was to be fulfilled, for one afternoon my wife felt well enough to risk our carrying her down the stairs and placing her on a quiet Turcoman horse. When we rode through the garden of the English Legation at Gulahek and passed the tennis court, all the onlookers rose and the players stopped their game to come out and congratulate my wife on her almost miraculous recovery. It was only after this occurrence that she realized her restoration to life and appreciated the sympathy which had gone so far as to cause an English game of tennis to be interrupted.

We had met, during those trying weeks, with the greatest kindness from all the members of the Diplomatic Corps as well as from other friends. Nāsiraddīn Shah, when he heard that a young Englishwoman had nursed my wife and been of the greatest assistance in her recovery, bestowed on Miss Neame a large and beautiful gold medal (awarded hitherto only to soldiers for exceptional bravery in the field), 'wherewith to adorn her virtuous bosom', as the passage in the accompanying *Farmān* (diploma) was rendered in the official English translation.

Of course nursing alone would not have sufficed without the skilful and devoted medical attendance of Dr. Odling. This excellent man had doubled his energy during the epidemic, riding from one village to another and to town and back, giving his patients practical advice as well as medicine. He did all he could to cheer up the young men in the Bank and in the Telegraph Department, arranging musical entertainments for them to keep up their spirits. He had a cheering influence on patients, Europeans as well as Persians, although he spoke Persian very badly. But whenever he attempted to do so, it was enough to make a dying Persian laugh!

An epidemic is one of those great afflictions which serve to show the real value of people. I am glad to say that the Germans in Persia were among those who showed most courage and did most to help others. The members of the Russian Legation shut themselves up in their park at Zarganda, leaving those of their countrymen who lived outside the Legation to their fate. Several Russian families were thus abandoned, to die unattended by the Russian doctor. Two German officers in the Persian service, Herr Schubert and Baron Wedel, tried to nurse these unfortunate people. In one case, they had to bury with their own hands a Cossack officer, his wife, and two little daughters. They washed the bodies of the dead, shrouded them in sheets and carried them on their shoulders outside the village, where they dug

graves for them. Only one Russian had appeared at the house to offer his services, but he was so heavily intoxicated (as a precaution against infection) that he only proved a nuisance. The two Germans saw no way out of the difficulty excepting that one of them should drink with the Russian until he fell under the table and so put him out of action for some time. Baron Wedel volunteered to undertake this task, which was more congenial to him, and showed better results than his nursing!

During all these weeks of anxiety I had limited myself to the strictly necessary duties of my office, among which looking after my fellow-countrymen was the foremost. The rest of my time I had to spend at home, as I did not wish to keep Miss Neame any longer after the immediate danger was over. As I was sitting one day on my balcony my friend, Henry Cadogan, First Secretary at the British Legation, of whose death two years later I have spoken in a previous chapter, came to see me. He was the first man who had ventured to enter our infected premises. After inquiring about my wife's health, he said: 'It is all very well, Rosen, nursing your wife, and going on looking after her, but you must not neglect your official duties. When did you send your last political report?'—'How can I write political reports,' was my answer, 'when I see nobody and hear nothing of what is going on?'—'That is exactly what I imagined,' said Cadogan, 'and that's why I have come. I am going to explain the present situation to you as the information we get from all parts of Persia shows it to be. You had better pencil down a word here and there while I speak.' I must add here, that the British Legation had consuls or agents all over the country and that, besides that, it received ample information from Downing Street and the Government of India. All the news I heard from Cadogan was, therefore, as reliable as it was interesting.

I was now able to write a long and detailed report, giving a review of the whole situation in Western and

Central Asia. It was the most interesting report I had written since I was in charge, and I felt most grateful to Cadogan, and also to Sir Frank Lascelles, without whose approval—if not initiative—the information would not have been given to me.

Several weeks after this, Cadogan came again, and handed me a copy of *The Times* in which, to my great surprise and dismay, I found my whole report from beginning to end figuring as the letter of an occasional correspondent in Constantinople! I was horrified. What must my English friends think of my discretion, or worse still, of the reliability of my Government? But Cadogan only smiled and said, as he mounted his horse: 'I suppose it's all right.' It must have been, for the confidence shown me by Sir Frank and his secretaries remained quite unchanged, and made it possible for me to continue writing political reports which were, as I found later on, appreciated by the Foreign Office in Berlin. I was never actually told how my report had found its way to *The Times*, but circumstances suggested the following explanation. Since Sir Frank Lascelles and his family had come to Persia we had heard from him and also from his ladies, very much about Mr. Chirol—afterwards Sir Valentine Chirol—who evidently was one of their best friends. Mr. Chirol was then Correspondent of *The Times* in Berlin, and was one of the few persons admitted to the presence and enjoying the confidence of Baron von Holstein, the actual director of Germany's foreign politics, of whom more will have to be said in another chapter. A great intimacy had sprung up between these two men of wide knowledge and political instinct. I imagined therefore, that Holstein had given Chirol my report to read, and at his request placed it at his disposal. It had been dated from Constantinople to conceal its origin. I have related this incident in detail to show what Anglo-German relations still were in 1893 and what they ought never to have ceased to be.

When, not long after this, I made Mr. Chirol's acquaintance in London, I found that all I had heard about him from my English friends in Persia was not exaggerated. 'The red-haired, blue-eyed Irishman,' as he said Holstein called him, seemed to know the whole world and to be able to master all the difficult problems of East and West. He had made a special study of Asia. The walls of his bachelor's apartment showed many fine water-colour sketches he had done in Turkey, China and other countries. I remember with pleasure the interesting luncheons to which he was good enough to invite me. But alas, his friendship with Holstein, helpful in maintaining a good understanding between Germany and England, came to an abrupt end in 1897. I did not at the time blame Mr. Chirol for this, because I knew that Holstein's friendships were not usually of a lasting character and sometimes might suddenly change into coolness if not enmity.

I think the estrangement between Holstein and Chirol began soon after the telegram by which the German Emperor congratulated President Kruger on frustrating Dr. Jameson's raid against the Transvaal Republic, without foreign aid. The sensation created by this unexpected move was great, but it had not at that time taken the proportions it assumed some years later. Few people in Persia knew very much about South African affairs. I remember the indignation of an English gentleman, the civilian director of the Indo-European Telegraph Company, on hearing that the German Emperor had addressed a telegram to a nigger and a heathen! When I pointed out to him that President Kruger was a white man and a Protestant, he answered that the Boers were surely a Kaffir tribe not yet converted to Christianity!

I am not going to say anything about the political and moral merits or demerits of the case, but I know, on the best authority, that the Emperor offered great resistance to his official advisers and refused to sign the

telegram until he was hard pressed to do so. He afterwards told me in Holland in 1919 that he had ultimately given in, because he did not want to oppose the insistent demands of his constitutional advisers. He told me that he had thrown down the pen three times before affixing his 'W' to the draft. Those who afterwards made so much of this incident did not perhaps consider the fact that the Jameson Raid was, after all, a breach of peace and an act of which the British Government itself felt obliged publicly to express its disapproval, and that as a result its author, Dr. Jameson, was sentenced to fifteen months' imprisonment. It is interesting to note that the one man whom the whole affair concerned most, Cecil Rhodes, seemed not to resent the Emperor's action, but sought his acquaintance, if not his friendship. I have been told that he was not, as was generally believed, the instigator of the Raid, and knew nothing about it until it had taken place. When the news reached him he said: 'Jimmy has upset my apple-cart', and disappeared for two days on Table Mountain.

In March 1899 Rhodes came to Berlin to seek an audience of the Kaiser, whom he professed to admire. The aide-de-camp who was on duty that day told me the following details about that interview. Cecil Rhodes arrived in a yellowish-brown lounge suit with a scarlet tie. This placed the officer in an awkward position. He went in to the Emperor, who was awaiting the 'Empire Builder', and told him he hardly ventured to introduce Rhodes on account of the extraordinary costume he had chosen for the audience. 'What on earth has he got on?' asked the Emperor, who, when told, laughed and said: 'From your frightened looks I had expected worse; let him come in.' The interview was a long and hearty one and ended in a very friendly manner. After the South African War, Cecil Rhodes, who died three years later, left the Emperor a certain sum of money in his will, in order to facilitate a two years' term of study

at Oxford for German students. The object of this legacy, which brought many German youths—among them my son—to the famous English University, was obviously to improve Anglo-German relations. The outbreak of the War of course put an end to this institution.

Cecil Rhodes continued working with Joseph Chamberlain for an Anglo-German understanding until the end of his life. This is clearly shown by a letter written by Rhodes in May, 1902, to Baron Eckardstein, who has published it in his Memoirs. At any rate nothing disturbed our personal relations at Teheran at that time, nor was there any coolness between the members of the German and British Legations while I was in Persia.

Some time before I left that country a secret Anglo-German agreement about the future of the Portuguese Colonies in Africa and in the Indian Archipelago was concluded (30th of August, 1898), which seemed to consolidate the good understanding between the two countries.

While very promising conversations were taking place in London in view of a permanent Anglo-German understanding, if not an alliance, Sir Valentine Chirol, who had 'acquired from various confidential sources sufficient knowledge of what was going on', had, as he tells us, got 'a note of warning occasionally sounded in *The Times*', as, amongst other reasons, he had not much confidence in the result of the conversations which were taking place between Joseph Chamberlain, the Duke of Devonshire and Lord Lansdowne with Baron Eckardstein.

Sir Valentine Chirol is right when he says (*Fifty Years in a Changing World*, p. 288) that he did not imagine himself to be in very good odour in the Wilhelmstrasse; in fact all members of the Berlin Foreign Office, Baron Holstein at the head of them, were seriously alarmed at the hostility of *The Times* towards an Anglo-German *rapprochement*. I can testify to this because I was at that time one of the clerks of the Political Department

and in daily close touch with Holstein, who was the leader, so to speak, of German Foreign Politics.

One day I was asked to lunch at the British Embassy by Sir Frank Lascelles, and met Chirol there. I was very pleased to see him, but I did not conceal from him that I deeply regretted the estrangement which had replaced his former intimacy with Holstein. 'It is a great pity,' I added, 'that two men of so much knowledge and political understanding should now be enemies.' Chirol, after some hesitation, said that he had not meant to go to the Foreign Office, but ended by saying that if he could be sure of a polite reception he would pay a visit to Holstein. Of course I told Holstein at once of my interview with Chirol, and that he was willing to call on him. But Holstein answered that nothing would induce him to receive Chirol after his virulent campaign against Germany. It was not without the intercession of the Under-Secretary of State, Herr von Mühlberg, that Holstein was at last prevailed upon to receive Chirol and to promise to be civil to him.

Sir Valentine Chirol gives a somewhat different account of this incident on page 287 and the following pages of his *Fifty Years in a Changing World*.[1] According to his version he received, just when the *pourparlers* were ripe to pass from the unofficial to the official stage (in October, 1901), a pressing invitation from Holstein to come and talk over with the Imperial Chancellor the whole question of Anglo-German relations which were to be placed, he hoped, 'on a sound and permanent footing of amity in accordance with the highest interests of both countries'.

[1] I only read Sir Valentine Chirol's *Fifty Years in a Changing World* after I had nearly completed my *Oriental Memories*. I found it one of the most interesting and fascinating books I knew. Unfortunately, however, it shows throughout a strong bias against Germany, which sometimes has led the talented author to unjustified conclusions with regard to the motives of German politicians. In a great problem there are two sides to be considered. Sir Valentine Chirol sees only one of these.

Then follows in Chirol's book a most dramatic account of his interview with Prince Bülow.

It is difficult, to say the least, to reconcile Chirol's version with what I very distinctly remember of this incident. Yet I would not have trusted my memory had I not found the following autograph letter written by Sir Valentine to me on the 4th of November, the day of his departure from Berlin:

British Embassy,
Berlin.
November 4, 1901.

Dear Dr. Rosen,—

I must send you a line before leaving to say how much indebted I feel myself towards you for having so kindly and effectively delivered my message to Baron von Holstein. I have had two long and interesting conversations with him, and apart from the pleasure of seeing old relations restored which were amongst the most agreeable reminiscences of my former residence in Berlin, I think they may bear some fruit in promoting a better understanding between our two countries. They have certainly served to clear up several points which had hitherto remained obscure to me in the policy of Germany.

Kindly present my best remembrances to Madame Rosen, and believe me,

Yours sincerely,
Valentine Chirol.

On the 25th of September, 1929, I had the opportunity of asking Prince Bülow what he remembered of his interview with Sir Valentine Chirol in 1901. He said that he did not remember anything about it, and that he had seen so little of Chirol that he did not even remember what he looked like.

On the 22nd of October Sir Valentine Chirol's sudden death was announced and Prince Bülow died a few days later, on the 28th of October.

PART V

BAGHDAD

Parts V and VI are to a great extent extracts from letters.

CHAPTER I

On a Special Mission to Baghdad—Egypt, Palestine and Syria Revisited—Organizing a Caravan—Ride from Damascus across the Syrian Desert to the Euphrates

IN 1897 I had taken a leave of several months, which I spent partly in Germany, partly in England and France. I was at that time trying hard to secure my removal from Teheran to another post. The principal reason was that my wife suffered more and more from the Persian climate. According to the rule then in practice, I could only aspire to a Consulate in some Eastern town. This was looked upon as a come-down by most of the Teheran diplomats. In reality it was a promotion, and I welcomed the idea of occupying an independent post somewhere in Turkey or Egypt. I tried to avoid returning to Persia, where I would most likely have been kept for some indefinite period. I therefore asked for some work at the Foreign Office in Berlin. I was very happy to spend a few more months at home after an absence of more than seven years.

My joy was, however, not to be of long duration, for one day in December, 1897, I found a sealed letter on my table, by which I was requested to go as Acting Consul to Baghdad with the least possible delay.

I left Berlin on the 31st of January, 1898, for Constantinople, and asked the Ambassador, Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, whether he had any idea for what purpose I was being sent to the banks of the Tigris. He had no idea. I must say here that at that time, not only had the concession for the building of the Baghdad Railway not yet been granted to a German company, but that the German Government had not yet examined the question whether they considered the concession desirable or not. Neither in Constantinople nor during my stay in Baghdad was the railway question discussed or mentioned by any official person.

The director of the Consular Department of the Foreign Office in Berlin had asked me to go to Baghdad by the quickest route. He would not hear of my going overland, because, he said, that would take more time. In this, however, he was mistaken. A German merchant who started before me and went via Egypt, Aden and Bombay to Basra, and thence by river steamer to Baghdad, took exactly one hundred days, and arrived long after me. My own journey took sixty-five days. The fact that an English airman recently covered the whole distance from London to Baghdad within twenty-four hours shows to what extent the world has changed. As I had no precise information about the land journey, I sailed from Constantinople to Alexandria, and went to Cairo to consult a friend who had performed the journey several times. He told me all about the stages and distances, and gave me many useful hints about the country and people. From Cairo I went to Beyrout in the pleasant company of the young Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, nephew of King Edward VII, and brother of Queen Marie of Rumania. I was sorry to leave him and his two sympathetic A.D.C.s in Jaffa, whence the Duke went on to Jerusalem. I never saw him again, as he died not long after.

I had meant to spend one or two days with my old

WELĪ IMĀM ALI, MUHAMMEDAN SANCTUARY AND WELL IN THE PLAIN OF SHARON

From a Water-Colour Sketch

friends in Beyrout, but was delayed for ten days by ill-health. I had by no means recovered when I took the train to Damascus. The *diligence* in which I had travelled to Damascus a few years before, had been replaced by a rickety railway and the trip by train was much less pleasant. This line had obviously been built less for the benefit of the travellers than for that of the Paris promoters who had placed their numerous protégés as directors and inspectors in the railway service. The line was so badly built that passengers were shaken as in a small boat during a storm, while merchandise was still transported by camels. It may amuse those who have recently travelled from Syria to Baghdad within two or three days by motor to see what a tedious and difficult affair that journey was not many years ago. But I leave it to the reader to judge whether the charm and interest of an overland journey by caravan was not greater than the present mode of locomotion.

A few days spent in Damascus in the beautiful Saracen house of my old friend the German Consul, Mr. Luetticke, and the medical attendance of an excellent American physician had so improved my health that I felt fit for the land journey. It now only remained to find muleteers who would undertake the march across the desert and through Mesopotamia to the banks of the Tigris. These were not easy to find. As I was sauntering through the bazaars one day, my ear caught the familiar sounds of a Persian conversation. I turned round, and found that it came from some Persian muleteers. Not in the least astonished at being accosted in their own language, they told me they had taken pilgrims to Damascus, and were now on their way back to Khorāssān, in North-Eastern Persia, via Baghdad. We soon came to an agreement and a contract was drawn up in due form at the German Consulate. When it became known that a German Consul was going to Baghdad, two young globe-trotters, a Frenchman and an Englishman, asked

me whether they could join me. To this I agreed, and so we were a cosmopolitan party of three. I engaged an Arab cook, a Maronite of the name of Tannūs (Anthony) who had done the trip before. We were only five hours late in starting, which is not bad for the first march of a long journey. The delay was principally caused by the Persian muleteers trying to sell their animals on the morning fixed for our departure, and they had to be captured on the horse-market. When I remonstrated with them, they excused themselves by naming the high prices which had been offered them. This they had difficulty in resisting, notwithstanding the sealed contracts and the hand-money they had taken from us. 'Insān bashar ast!'—Man is but flesh!

After winding our way through the bazaars and streets of Damascus on a fine but cold morning in March, 1898, we halted in the Ghūta, the garden land that surrounds the town, to bid farewell to our friends who had ridden out to see us off. Our little caravan was headed by six *zabtiehs*, Turkish gendarmes, and a non-commissioned officer. They were well mounted, and made up somewhat for their unbecoming would-be European uniforms by wearing the *kafiya*, the picturesque head-cloth of the Bedouins, fastened by a woollen rope interwoven with gold. The Persian muleteers, who had spent several hours that morning in adjusting and loading our baggage, were marching along in sullen silence, interrupted by the occasional curses directed against their mules, the bitterness and intensity of which no other tongue but Persian can render. They also wished that the fathers of those who had made the many unwieldy and incongruous wallets, hat-boxes, gun-cases, cameras, etc., belonging to my two travelling companions, should have their graves defiled, and that their bodies should be burnt in hell. The same, and even worse, was to happen to the fathers of the American saddlers who had specially devised my friends' patent

travelling saddles for this journey. In substance, the Persians were right. The baggage of my friends, who had no experience of Eastern travel, was unpractical and incongruous. When there was a heavy piece there would be no adequate counter-weight, and the smaller ones were almost impossible to fasten on a pack-saddle. The patent riding-saddles, at the same time, gave every animal upon which they were placed a sore back. This was all the more regrettable as our mounts were really excellent and their powers of endurance astonishing.

The ordinary caravan road would have taken us due north to Aleppo, and thence to Meskene on the Euphrates, along which we would have marched for more than three weeks to a place only two marches distant from the Tigris and Baghdad. But this was too long, and we preferred cutting in a straight line across the Syrian Desert to Deir on the Euphrates. Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra (third century of our era), provided this track with a number of wells, so that travellers might find water at every stage. She also built towers to guide travellers, and to prevent them from straying on to a wrong track, which would eventually lead them into waterless parts of the wilderness, where they would become victims of thirst, hunger and fatigue. These towers had long since disappeared and our guides knew many a tale of caravans lost in the desert, where the skeletons of men and beasts were occasionally discovered by roaming Bedouins.

After leaving the garden belt of Damascus, a very forest of fruit trees now in full blossom, we rode across cultivated but barren land, and put up at night at a very clean house. It was only after the second stage that the real desert began. The appearance of the Syrian Desert was a great disappointment to my two travelling companions. Instead of yellow sand with an occasional oasis with palm trees, there was an endless, gently undulating plain covered with green shrubs and herbs,

which in its monotony proved very dull. Whenever we passed a gentle ridge that lay before us, we would at once behold another similar ridge in the distance, from which we saw no more than we had seen previously. Occasionally we would find a few red tulips blossoming on the track. They made me think of a quatrain of Omar Khayyám, which I quote from my literal translation from the Persian text:

'No. 48

'Wherever in the desert a bed of tulips has sprung,
Those tulips have been an Emperor's blood.
Wherever a violet grows out of the earth,
It is a beauty-spot which once has been on the face of a beloved.'

The names of my two young travelling companions were Monsieur T. and Mr. H. T. was French, but, I think, with a strain of non-French blood. He knew English and German, but preferred to speak French. He had travelled all over the world and painted very well in water-colours. He travelled for the sake of painting, and was also very fond of shooting. H. was Scotch, I think, very nice and very musical, but his French was hard to endure on a long journey. He said to Frau Luetticke: 'J'ai acheté un livre de quatrecents feuilles pour mon diarrhée' (for my diary). He was very good-natured, and did all the packing for the two. He was like T.'s squaw. When I got him alone we spoke English, and that gave my ears a rest. I got on capitally with both of them.

The muleteers were excellent. It was queer to see six Persian *chārvadārs*, wearing their felt caps and *gīvehs* (white Persian shoes), walking along with their enormous strong mules through a country of which they knew and desired to know nothing. They did not speak a word of Arabic, and took no heed of anything said to them in that language. The Arabs thought them very rude and uncivilized. I often heard them say: 'Mafish nās abrad min al A'jām'—There are no people colder than

the Persians. The only friend they made in the country was a pariah dog, which they fed and thereby induced to follow them. They asked me to propose a name for the animal, and I chose the names of some of the most famous Persian heroes. But they ultimately called him *Nun-dūst*—bread-friend—because he only followed them on account of the morsels they threw to him. When the marches became too long, *Nun-dūst* lagged behind and probably returned to his native village.

On the 17th we had to journey for twelve hours across a barren plain resembling those in Persia, without meeting a soul. At dusk we reached the village of Kariatein, and put up at the house of the Aghā, or head-man, Fāris Aghā Feiz, who gave us a hospitable reception. The Aghā is a fine, tall Bedouin, who rules his house and his tribe like a patriarch of the Bible. He took me by the hand, and led us into a stone hall decorated with sculptures taken from the ruins of Palmyra, and then into a drawing-room with European furniture. After many *salaams* and many diminutive cups of coffee, we were shown into our bedrooms, where we found quite good European and Arab beds. We changed our clothes, which had been soaked by rain during the last hour of our march, and then were asked to dinner. It was a long dinner of Arab dishes, served in half-European style. I liked this better than my companions did. Nobody besides the Sheikh sat down with us. A dozen Bedouins, with white *kafiyas* and black ropes round their heads, stood about serving us. They were his brothers, cousins, nephews, etc.

The conversation at dinner was quite amusing. Of course the Sheikh asked what our nationality and religion were, and was very much astonished that people of different nationality and creed could travel together. He also tried to entice me to enter into a discussion on religious topics, but in vain. 'Was Maryam, the mother of Jesus, married or not?' I said I had lived in Jerusalem

many years ago, but Maryam, the mother of Jesus, had lived there before my time.

Of course we did not get off until seven the next morning, but our caravan had a good start. We had tea with biscuits before leaving. The Sheikh served this himself in front of the house, surrounded by all his Bedouins in their picturesque attire. He himself wore a white skull-cap and an elegant European dressing-gown. As we rode out of the village, we saw hundreds of carcasses of camels, asses, sheep and goats, lying in all the lanes. There had been rinderpest, and a great dearth which had destroyed almost all their live-stock. It was a dreadful sight, because there were not dogs and jackals enough to devour all those dead beasts.

The 18th was a long marching day. We had to go fourteen hours to the next well, over an absolutely barren desert. Our escort now consisted of six picturesque Bedouins mounted on beautiful mares. The head of our escort, Abd el Kādir, was the brother of Fāris, the Aghā of Kariatein. He rode a lovely tall mare, worth about two hundred Turkish pounds. Her name was *Saqlavīya*,—the greyhound. She was never tied up, but ran about quite free. She understood everything her master said to her. I asked Abd el Kādir whether their ladies made any fine carpets or saddle-bags as the Persian nomad women did. His answer was characteristic of the two nations: 'La, alhamdu l'Illah!'—No, thank God! With all primitive Semitic nations the idea of happiness is never to have any work to do, just as in the Bible, where work is the punishment for sin. The main object of the escort was evidently to extract *bakhshish* from the travellers. Otherwise a smaller number would have sufficed. One generally gave a *majidi* a day, but double to the leaders. This custom then prevailed all over the East.

In the afternoon we saw thousands of gazelle, but only from afar, because they were very shy. I had on

one other occasion come across a similar number of gazelle, on the edge of the Great Salt Desert in Persia.

Towards evening it began to rain again, and we had some difficulty in reaching the lonely little guard-house at which we were to stay. We were nearly misled by seeing fires in the distance. One man of our escort possibly went there, because he never turned up. We do not know what became of him and his horse. The nearest well is about sixty kilometres from where we last saw him. He had volunteered to carry a long spear, which I had brought from Damascus to serve as a flagstaff for our camp. 'And horse and rider saw I naught again!'

It got dark, and the track became so indistinct that we could only keep together by firing our guns as signals. It was quite dark when at seven o'clock we at length reached Ain el baidā—White Spring—a dejected little building whose doors and window-frames had long since been used as fuel. Our caravan, drenched with rain, arrived an hour later, guided by torches that we lit on the roof of the *qishla* (guard-house). These buildings resemble the Persian *chapar-khanehs*. There is always a little *bālā-khaneh* or upper chamber on the roof. In this we camped, after stopping up the windows as best we could. The 'White Spring' was nothing more than one of the old Palmyrene or Roman wells. Its mouth of white marble showed the deep cuts made by the ropes to which the pail had been attached during the last sixteen centuries.

We did not leave until ten the next morning (19th of March) because it was raining too hard. A strong east wind blew cutting rain into our faces when we started. But the horses went at a very brisk pace and took us into Palmyra at a voluntary canter. This was quite exceptional, because the unsafety of the desert and the danger of getting on to a wrong track never allowed us to get out of sight of the caravan.

The entry into Palmyra is very fine. It leads through a sort of gate of low hills, which opens on to a plain covered with temples and many high columns. The main part of the present village of Tadmur is in a corner of the big Sun Temple. All these grand remains of Queen Zenobia's once flourishing capital are burnished with the golden-red tint of the surrounding desert. Among the columns that fringe the main street there are two monoliths of syenite, a material which can only have been brought there from Syene, now Assuan on the Upper Nile. We could hardly understand how such unwieldy and heavy objects could have been transported over land and sea for such a distance.

We stopped at the house of the Sheikh, Muhammad ibn Abdullah, a polite, middle-aged man, accustomed to receiving European guests. He had a romantic history. He had served as guide to a wealthy French lady, when suddenly in the middle of the desert a cloud of dust arose on the right. 'Hada ghazu,'—that is a gang of robbers, was the Sheikh's explanation.—'Pour l'amour de Dieu, sauvez-moi, je vous donnerai tout ce que je possède si vous sauvez ma vie.'—The Sheikh unsheathed his scimitar, galloped up to the robbers and put the fifty horsemen who composed the gang to flight. But hardly had he returned to his protégée when a similar cloud of dust appeared on the left, also caused by fifty armed Bedouins. After these had been dispersed, owing to the prowess of Sheikh Muhammad, the lady fell on her knees before him, saying that all her riches would not suffice to reward him for having so bravely saved her life. She would, therefore, make a present of her own self to her saviour, and so she did. She had also to defray the expenses incurred by the Sheikh, who engaged a hundred of his friends to organize the attacks, though she, of course, had no idea for what purpose the money was to be used. Later on she took her friend with her to France in his picturesque costume, and showed him

the Paris Exhibition. She also gave him the means to build the stone house where we were now his guests.

I found Muhammad ibn Abdullah much less interesting than the Sheikh of Kariatein, and also the food and accommodation were most primitive. We had our meals in our bedroom, sitting on low chairs like footstools at a low round table with the Sheikh, and Abdulkadir, his brother, and Ibrahim Efendi, the Mudir or Governor of Palmyra. Sulphurous water was the only drink served at table.

All the water of Palmyra, in fact, the very existence of the oasis, comes from the celebrated sulphur spring. This we visited and took a bath in it almost immediately after our arrival. We crept into the hole in the hill out of which it flows until we reached a cave where we had to swim, as our feet did not reach the ground. We had taken a candle with us, fixed on a board, to light up the cave where the light from outside did not penetrate. We stayed as long as we could in this bath of naturally tepid sulphur water, and we indulged in this luxury several times a day as long as we stayed there.

I made up my mind to put in a resting-day to give M. T., the French painter, the chance of doing some water-colour sketches of the ruins. Besides this, the 21st of March is the great Persian festival of Nouruz, their New Year coinciding with the beginning of Spring. I gave my Persian muleteers a sheep and some rice to celebrate the occasion. It was curious to observe how little gratitude they showed for my kind thought. No doubt they suspected me of some sinister design, such as deducting the money spent on their feast from the hire of the mules. It took me some trouble to reassure them, and they ended by inviting me to take a glass of tea with them.

We roamed about a good deal among the ruins, and especially admired the remains of the gigantic temple of Apollo, in a corner of which the greater part of modern

Palmyra, a cluster of miserable huts, was situated. I chaffed the inhabitants about their laziness, contrasting their hovels with the magnificent remains of antiquity. But they explained why they could not attempt to compete with these. These buildings, they said, have been erected by Sulaimān (Solomon), on whom be peace! He was the king of men, of beasts, and of the djinns (demons). It was easy for him to build like that, for he had only to command his djinns to bring the material from all parts of the earth and to pile it up according to his orders.

We left Palmyra early on the 22nd of March, and thanked our host for his hospitality. I had inquired from friends who had done this journey before me how I could repay the Sheikh for his trouble and expense, and I was told to put several gold sovereigns into the hand of the man who would hold my stirrup as I mounted my horse. I was to do this in a way that would allow the Sheikh to count the coins and to recover them from his retainer after our departure. This was done to the satisfaction of all concerned.

The distance from Palmyra to the Euphrates is very little less than the way we had come from Damascus. The desert seemed more barren and desolate than before and the stages still longer. From Sukhne, a village with a hot sulphur spring, to Bīr Kabākib, the distance is calculated at nineteen Turkish leagues or hours, equal to 95 kilometres. We had accordingly to start at midnight, groping in the dark through the tortuous alleys of the village. When we got into the open we had entirely lost all sense of direction. There was neither a trace of after-sunset glow in the west nor a sign of approaching dawn in the east. As I was trying to make out the direction with the aid of a compass, the head muleteer came up and asked me to let the leading horse of our caravan pass to show us the way. This was a very strong and well-shaped white pony

which, as a sign of its dignity as 'pīsh-hang', wore two large bells which had a deep mellow sound. Hardly had the animal passed me when he took up a direction which seemed to me to lead back to Palmyra. But the Persians reassured me, arguing that their leading horse's memory for localities never failed him. As he had done the journey from the Euphrates to Damascus, he would undoubtedly find his way back.

On the 24th of March we heard the creaking of the *na'ūras*, the big water-wheels, by which the inhabitants raise the water for irrigation purposes, some time before we could discern the fringe of scanty vegetation on the banks of the Euphrates. We reached the little town of Deir az Zor,—the Convent of the Woods,—before noon, and took up quarters in the buildings attached to the Armenian Church. We visited Zuhdi Bey, the Mutassarrif, or Governor, of Deir, who was known all over Syria for good administration of his province and for incorruptibility. He had built a stone bridge across the Euphrates which divided the town into two parts, and had erected a number of good stone buildings for public purposes. He received me with much courtesy, and was pleased to find recognition of his endeavours to improve the state of his district. He promised me to pay attention to the track across the desert from Damascus to the Euphrates, and to see to the restoration of the wells and of the turrets that had disappeared. I was able to give him a book with a map on which these were marked. I am afraid, however, that nothing has come of these excellent ideas, because soon after he fell a victim to intrigue emanating from the spies sent to Deir by Sultan Abdul Hamid. In those days no official could feel safe in his post, and many of them preferred spending the night in their offices to seeing their place occupied by a competitor.

CHAPTER II

PRIMITIVE NAVIGATION—ATTACK BY A NOMAD TRIBE —NARROW ESCAPE—PICTURESQUE SCENERY

WALKING along the river, we saw a number of primitive flat boats that served to carry wood from the tamarisk groves near Deir to the Lower Euphrates Valley, where there is no fuel. We hired two of these rafts, or boats, one for me and the other for my two travelling companions. The two boats were linked together. The navigation of this square barge was managed by three men with long poles, which they used to push into the part of the river where the current was strongest. Although the men showed some skill and experience in their craft, the locomotion was very slow, not much exceeding the speed of a good caravan. But it offered the advantage that our animals could walk along the bank unloaded, while we transported all our baggage in our boats.

Early next morning we took leave of the Armenian priests, who tried to extract large sums of money from us on the plea that the church had been looted during the great massacres of Armenians that had taken place little more than a year earlier. It is true that the Armenians had suffered terribly in 1896, and that a great part of the population had met with a cruel death at the hands of the fanatic Muhammedans. We consequently tried to express our sympathy for our fellow-Christians by giving them as much as we possibly could spare; but our liberality by no means contented them.

On the morning of the 27th of March we saw our

caravan depart along the left bank of the Euphrates. The muleteers did not seem thankful for being allowed to do nearly half the journey without loads; they most likely suspected that we would deduct some of the money settled in the contract; but they let the 'pīsh-hang' take the lead and the other animals followed him.

Our navigation was a very slow one, but no other mode of locomotion would have brought us to Baghdad one day sooner. We saw no other craft on the river except a few primitive barges like our own, although a flat-bottomed steamer might go up as far as Meskene, a place not very distant from the Mediterranean. This scarcity of navigation is, I think, principally due to the lack of security in the country. We passed some large villages, but they were few and far between. From time to time a *nā'ūra*, one of the large water-wheels, would break the silence of the bleak and desolate country by its loud creaking. But the scanty supply it yielded would only be used to irrigate a small strip of land at the bottom of the erosion worked in the soil by the river. Whatever the miserable half-nomadic fellāhīn might reap from their agricultural exertions they had to share with the Bedouins who roamed through the desert to extort *khūwe*—brother-money—from all settlers, besides the heavy taxes levied on them by governmental raiding parties. On the whole the country was so deserted that we frequently saw wild-boar come down to the bank to quench their thirst.

We had often laughed at the accounts in the books of travellers we now had ample leisure to read, and we had scoffed at the Governor's insistence on giving us an escort in the shape of a gendarme. One evening, however, we were to learn that there was some reason for the Governor's solicitude. We had just gone to bed when we heard men shouting on the right bank of the river demanding that we should stop. On inquiry they told us they wanted to levy a toll of *habb*

(corn). In the event of our going on they would fire on us. Soon after, we heard a rifle-shot on our right and a number of people seemed to follow our barge, which was slowly drifting along a narrow and, as we were soon to see, shallow arm of the river. We tried to gain the middle of the water, but by that time the inhabitants of the left bank—that is to say of an island of several miles length—had been aroused and joined in the shouts of *Habb! habb!* The weak current made it impossible for us to get on quickly. As I did not look upon the matter as serious, I lay down again under my improvised awning. But the voices grew nearer and louder and, at the same time, more menacing. Suddenly we were bombarded with stones and large balls of mud, some of which fell into my bed! At the same time a band of wild-looking fellows had swum by the aid of inflated skins towards our boats which they tried to scale. One of our boatmen was lightly wounded in the face by a spear, others received blows with clubs made of a wooden or cane stick with a ball of hard bitumen. Our people, however, defended themselves and caught hold of the spear of the leader—a trophy I still possess.

Having jumped out of bed and extricated myself from what had been my tent, I saw that we were surrounded on all sides by Arabs, who, fortunately for us, were armed only with spears and clubs. They were, of course, all naked and each one held in his hand the inflated skin which enabled him to swim when out of his depth. They drew closer together and the whole river seemed full of them. At that moment their Sheikh (leader) intoned the war-song: 'Allah qawī-nā 'alayhum!' —Allah, give us strength against them!'—upon which the others responded: 'Yā Rabb qawī-nā 'alayhum!'— Oh Lord, give us strength against them! While my servant was unpacking cartridges for my carbine, I was cutting the string of a parcel which contained the sword belonging to my uniform. The enemy could not know

that it was absolutely blunt. It proved useful for knocking the assailants on the knuckles whenever they put their hands on the rim of the boat. All our attempts to avoid an armed conflict seemed to have no effect. We argued, we threatened, we fired into the air, but the excited fellows came closer by leaps and bounds after each verse of their war-song. After having exhausted all my Arabic rhetoric I could not hinder my two travelling companions firing two cartridges of the finest shot on to two of the foremost of the assailants. It was astounding to see how little effect this had on them. They merely dipped under and grew still more infuriated. The report of the guns had attracted more people and the situation became rather critical. From all sides the war-song was heard: 'Allah qawī-nā 'alayhum!' It was with the greatest difficulty that I prevented the gendarme from firing his military rifle on to the cluster of men who were standing knee-deep in the shallow water at a distance of only three yards.

Fortunately, at this critical moment the helmsman of a boat which had so far accompanied ours and which was conveying three dervishes down-stream, stepped in as mediator. He jumped into the water, took the leader of our opponents by the hand and led him close to our boat to show him that we were carrying no corn. He told them that we were foreigners travelling to Baghdad and that we carried no merchandise of any kind. But this the Arabs would not believe. The Sheikh wanted to convince himself with his own eyes, but refused to enter our boat unless he was accompanied by a dozen of his men. He suggested that we should stop there until the morning when he could more easily see what our barges contained. These conversations lasted for more than an hour and were on the whole conducted on both sides in an amicable spirit, the boatman and the Sheikh standing hand in hand in the water. They were, however, from time to time interrupted by a

resumption of desultory hostilities and new verses of the war-song. The Sheikh at times consulted the elders of his tribe and then came out with new demands for corn as an indemnity for wounding two of his people. During these conversations we learnt that the name of the tribe was *Abu Hamām*,—the Father of the Dove. They were half nomadic but also cultivated barley on the silt left by the river when the waters began to fall. They levied a toll from all barges that went down the river and were themselves fleeced by the two mighty Bedouin tribes, the Shammar on the left and the Aneze on the right bank of the river, besides having to pay the taxes extorted by the Turkish Government.

All the Arabs of our party advised me to square the Abu Hamām with money and had begun to sound them on this question, but they did not know gold and would not accept Turkish pounds, only silver *majidis*, of which we had but a small provision. I insisted, however, on pushing on notwithstanding the warnings of all our people that this could not be carried out without serious bloodshed. In the meantime our barges had gradually drifted some distance further down-stream and further away from the Abu Hamām's principal settlement. They seemed less eager to renew their attack, because of the weapons they had seen in our hands or, possibly, because the wounded men now began to feel pain. We were still pursued for some time, but when we emerged from the shallow channel and got into the strong current of the main river we were no more molested, and the war-song gradually died away.

My people urged me to draw up a complaint against the tribe of Abu Hamām for having demanded toll from me and for using violence. This, however, I by no means contemplated doing. It would probably only have led to an expedition of soldiers and volunteers being sent out who would have squeezed the last penny from the miserable people whose poverty was, to a great

extent, due to the misrule of the same Government which would be ready enough to punish them.

The next days passed without incident. The air gradually grew warmer, and we enjoyed our daily swim in the yellow waters of the Euphrates. One of the stations, El Kaïn, consisted of a small mud fort garrisoned by two men. In front of it we saw the most abjectly poor people we met on our whole journey. They lived in holes they had dug with their hands in the muddy ground and over which they had spread rags of brown tenting as a protection against the sun. The men were half naked, the children wore no clothes at all. Their skin was covered with dirt and with eczema.

When on the morning of the 31st of March we turned the sharp corner of a rocky hill crowned by a fort we suddenly found ourselves in a region of an entirely different character to the country we had crossed from Damascus. Before us lay the long-stretched village of Ana, a garden of palm-trees and olive-trees fringing the rocky bank of the river as far as one could see. The large dripping water-wheels were covered with maiden-hair ferns and other plants. The village extended for several miles along the river, but only occupied the narrow strip between the rocks and the Euphrates. Both sides were hilly and picturesque. The flat dreary plain of the desert seemed to have come to an end.

The *Kaim-makām*—Governor—of Ana, a good-natured old Turk, helped us to visit the historic remains of this old town. They mostly dated from the time of the Sassanian Dynasty of Persia (226–641) which preceded the Moslem rule. The finest buildings are at the northern end of an island in the river which here seems to consist only of rapids. The old Sassanian castle, gilded by the rising sun, offered a magnificent sight when, on the morning of our departure, we shot down the river at a quite unusual speed. We had to go to the lower extremity of the long island, where a

landing was effected with some difficulty. After scaling several high walls we entered a pleasant grove of date-palm, in the midst of which was a fine old octagonal tower. From its top we enjoyed a beautiful view of the island and the river-banks with their gardens and their picturesque ruins. Most likely the island is the oldest part of Ana which was known in antiquity. It is mentioned by Xenophon, and the Roman Emperor Julian lost his river-fleet on its rocks. The old Sheikh attributed all old buildings to the Sassanian Kings, especially the ruins of a bridge which had formerly connected the island with the mainland. His stereotyped answer to all my questions was: '*Amar-hā* Azdashīr ibn Abābak, wa hū malik min mulūk al Furs,'—it was built by Azdashir the son of Abābak (Ardashīr Bābakān) and he was one of the Kings of the Persians. Before we left the island we were entertained by the Sheikh and his polite people with tea and coffee in small glasses and cups.

The strong current took us within a few hours to another island bearing ruins in the style of those of Ana. Our boatmen drew our attention to a flat rock on the Arabian side of the river which looked as if blood was streaming down its sides. It is called *maslaba*,—the place of crucifixion. I could not, however, learn who the supposed martyr had been. The ruins of yet another island, Hadītha, bore the same character as those of Ana and the Sheikh gave me the same answer as to their origin.

There were many islands planted with palm-trees and the river-banks were in parts fringed with palms. But the only place of any interest was the old village of Hīt, known from antiquity for its famous asphalt springs. This asphalt is the pitch mentioned in Genesis with which Noah was bidden to pitch his ark. It oozes out of the earth in different places and fills the village and its surroundings with its pungent smell. It is used for paving the streets and courtyards of Hīt and serves as

mortar in building. Its principal use is for pitching ships big and small, among them the quaint round baskets called *Kuffa* which ply the river at Baghdad. I have already mentioned the clubs made with a knob of hardened asphalt.

On the 5th of April we reached Falūja, the end of our navigation. Here we met our muleteers, who told us they had watched us all the time and managed to be at our disposal when we landed at Falūja. This enabled us to start that same evening at ten, profiting by the bright moonshine to do the two stages to Baghdad in one. At sunrise we halted at a ditch of running water, the only one between the Euphrates and the Tigris. We gave barley to our horses and breakfasted on the edge of the canal where we had lit a fire of camel-thorn. The muleteers invited me to a glass of their delicious tea.

CHAPTER III

Arrival at Baghdad—Life and Occupations—The Baghdad Railway Question

THE whole stretch from the Euphrates to the Tigris is a monotonous flat desert; but the ruin of a high Babylonian tower, Akarkuf, reminds one that this region was once amongst the most fertile of the earth. When, at length, the tiled domes and minarets of the Shiah sanctuary of Kāzimain became visible, we took the direction of the suburb of Baghdad which lies on the right bank of the river and is partly inhabited by Persians. We crossed the long bridge of boats and soon found ourselves in the midst of the narrow winding lanes and bazaars of Baghdad. At the eastern extremity of the town lay the German Consulate. I dismissed the muleteers after paying them what I owed them, besides giving them a handsome reward for their trouble. They showed, however, more astonishment than gratitude; they were evidently quite prepared that I should, under all sorts of pretexts, make large deductions from their pay. They left me with many a blessing, but apparently rather puzzled at my uncommon generosity.

The German Consulate is a fine building in good Oriental style. The inner decoration of the rooms betrayed Persian workmanship. One side of the house was washed by the Tigris, whose waters at that season made it possible for skippers to use the iron rings in the wall for pulling their craft up the river against the heavy current. The middle of the house was a garden—or rather a courtyard with a few flower-beds, and one

high palm-tree in it. Opposite, on the land side, was a fine date grove, the underwood of which consisted of orange- and lemon-trees. There was enough furniture in the house to make it quite comfortable at a time when the summer heat had not yet set in.

The Vali or Governor-General of Baghdad, Atāullāh Pasha, was a venerable old Turk with a long flowing white beard. He spoke only Turkish, his native tongue. His principal assistant was Sassoon Efendi, a tall and fine-looking fair-haired gentleman of Jewish extraction who knew German, English and French perfectly. It would have no doubt been agreeable for me to transact business with him if there had been any. But I soon found that there was absolutely nothing for me to do. Sassoon provided me with newspapers and magazines which he got from England, France and America. I was pleased to meet him more than twelve years later in Constantinople, where he was a prominent member of the Turkish Parliament.

By far the most agreeable amongst my colleagues and, in fact, amongst all the people I met in Baghdad was the British Consul-General or 'Resident', Colonel Loch. I received an invitation to dine with him and his staff before I had had time to pay him my call or even leave my card at his house. We made friends at once and arranged to meet every day for a walk or a ride as long as the season should permit. In the hot weather we were going to make excursions on the river in the steam launch of the Residency. The title 'Resident' was a remnant of the days of the East India Company who kept merchants resident in different towns outside India. These were invested with consular if not diplomatic functions and privileges. The Indian Government paid a considerable part of their salary and provided them with an escort of Indian *sowars* as well as with small yachts and gunboats in the seaports. This gave the British representative a position far superior to that of all the other Consuls.

Unfortunately my walks with Colonel Loch came to an abrupt and tragic end. He received a telegram telling him that his wife had lost her life by being burnt in their home in Scotland. Of course Colonel Loch left at once on home leave, and I have never seen him since.

The French Vice-Consul was a Levantine from Constantinople with whom I had very little in common. The Russian Consul, M. Kruglow, was a fanatic enemy of everything English. He suspected me of sympathies for England and treated me as little better than an enemy, not worthy of being admitted to the circle of his Armenian and Caucasian friends. No other country except Austria-Hungary was at that time represented by a *consul de carrière* at Baghdad. But this did not help me socially, as I was myself entrusted with the Austrian affairs. In consequence of this double function I hoisted the Austrian flag alongside the German flag on Sundays and on special occasions. One day, however, I found myself called upon to see the Austrian residents. On the 10th of September the Empress of Austria had been murdered by an Italian anarchist. I put both flags at half-mast and sent a circular to the Austrians asking them to come to the Consulate without delay. Only one old man appeared who gave me the impression of being rather deaf. Notwithstanding this apparent defect I told him of the tragic end of his Empress, and added words of sympathy dictated by the occasion. At the end of my speech the old man said: 'Do you mind repeating that in English? I do not understand a single word of German.' He was a Dane who had deserted his ship at Basra about forty years ago and who had not long after acquired the protection of an Armenian wine-dealer who had acted as Austrian Vice-Consul. My hope that I should be able to look after the subjects of the allied Dual Monarchy thus vanished.

The German colony consisted of two merchants who

carried on business in company. They were both married and there was one small child. But they, too, gave me no work, for they managed their business without requiring the Consul's assistance. There was next to no correspondence, as German trade seemed to be limited to the activity of the one German firm I mentioned. I often thought that the Foreign Office in Berlin had forgotten my existence, which, however, as later events taught me, was by no means the case. But it was difficult for me to write reports, because at that time the Berlin authorities had not yet made up their minds whether they would take an interest in the scheme of a railway from Asia Minor to Baghdad and to the Persian Gulf. I myself looked upon such a scheme as rather fantastic and did not wish to recommend it. I saw the great political difficulties which a German enterprise was likely to meet with in these distant regions where our Government could give it little, if any, protection.[1] But it was especially the abject state I had found the country in during my overland journey and the lack of population and agriculture that made me consider a railway through the deserts of northern Arabia unprofitable. To put the once fertile regions of Mesopotamia under cultivation and thereby increase its agricultural population would require the restoration of the old canals which now lay dry. Sir W. Wilcox's scheme of irrigation was not yet known at the time of my stay in Baghdad.

Taking all these circumstances into consideration, I found that I had to resign myself to spend about six months in Baghdad without any work to do and without

[1] The vehement campaign which set in against the Baghdad railway scheme not long after the concession had been granted to a German firm in the autumn of 1898 was, however, quite unjustified. It was started by a member of the Russian Embassy in London and was led much more in the interest of Tsarist Russia bent upon hindering any progress in Turkey than in that of England, which might easily have, and ultimately did, come to an agreement with the German company.

even the illusion of making myself useful to my country. The time spent there was entirely lost to me and was of no use to anyone. I had to live through it as through a term of imprisonment with solitary confinement. I knew that the great heat when it came would make riding impossible and I found no congenial company either among the European or among the native population.

But the hot weather had not yet set in, and I thought I might use the comparatively cool days that were left for an expedition into the hills on the other side of the Persian border.

CHAPTER IV

EXPEDITION TO PUSHT-I KŪH—DESERT HOSPITALITY—MANDALĪ—THE MUDIR AND HIS STORIES—THE PERSIAN AGENT AND HIS BRIGAND FRIENDS—ARISTOTLE'S OPINION ON THE QUESTION WHETHER BEARS LAY EGGS—AN ADVENTUROUS NIGHT RIDE

ALTHOUGH I had been promised that my stay in Baghdad was to be a temporary one, I had at the bottom of my heart a certain suspicion that I might possibly have to spend another summer there. I could not wish my family to live in Baghdad during the hot weather. I therefore acted according to the advice of the Prophet, who, when one of the believers asked him: 'I have commended my camel to the care of Allah, shall I trust in Allah or fetlock my camel?' answered: 'Trust in Allah and fetlock your camel.' I trusted the Foreign Office and I made provisions for every eventuality. I knew that the Abbaside Caliphs had a summer resort in the mountains of Persia. This I wished if possible to discover; it had to be done as soon as possible, as otherwise I might be overtaken by the hot weather.

The difficulty consisted in the unsettled state of the nominally Persian, in reality almost independent, province of Pusht-i Kūh, situated to the north-east of Baghdad. This country was inhabited by a section of the tribe of the Lurrs, whose ruler was the old and much-dreaded Hussein Kuli Khan, generally called Abul Qadāra, Father of the Scimitar. Very few Europeans had up to that date penetrated the almost inaccessible mountains of the old chief. I knew of only two. The first was

Sir Henry Layard, who passed through Pusht-i Kūh disguised as a Persian in 1841 and was in great danger of being recognized—as he tells us in his early adventures in Persia, Susania and Babylonia. But, as I learnt from his book, two other Englishmen, Fotheringham and Grant, had been brutally murdered by the uncle of the chief reigning in his days. The next European was a Swiss merchant, Wortmann, who had ventured a trip to the Lurrs a few years ago to recover some money which was owing him; but he never returned, and nobody heard what became of him. I was warned by everybody, official or non-official, against this expedition; but a letter of recommendation which I obtained from a Turkish General, Kiasim Pasha—a son-in-law of Sultan Abdul Hamid—seemed to promise a certain amount of security. Moreover, I was encouraged by the assurances of a Baghdad horse-dealer, Ajīl ibn Shabīb, who assured me that he was on very friendly terms with the Father of the Scimitar, and would make everything easy for me if I took him along with me. Ajīl was what one would call in German 'Ein Salon-Beduine'—a drawing-room Bedouin. He was a tall, fine-looking Arab of Bedouin ancestry, always beautifully clothed, and a remarkably good rider. As to his honesty, it was certainly no greater than that of horse-dealers in other countries. Besides Ajīl, one of the German merchants I have mentioned asked to join me, as he was planning a trip into Persia and wished to proceed from Amleh, the capital of Pusht-i Kūh, to the Persian town of Kirmānshāh.

We were all well mounted and well equipped, when we started one afternoon to the ferry which plies on the River Diala, a few miles distant from the celebrated ruins of Ctesiphon. There we passed part of the night, after crossing the river, and started on our desert march some time before sunrise.

We were most hospitably entertained by the Sheikhs of two small camps, and reached a large estate belonging

to a Greek in Constantinople. I knew the manager, also a Greek of the name of Kyriakos who had visited me in Baghdad and who invited me to spend a few days with him. We and our animals were all housed and entertained by our kind host, and continued our march early on the following day. The irrigated and cultivated land soon ended and we again found ourselves in the desert. But we were gradually approaching the mountains of Persia. A long low range of hills, the Hamrīn, runs parallel to the higher mountains. This range is the favourite abode of highwaymen, partly Kurds, partly Lurrs, and partly Arabs. A low pass, over which our path lay, bears the characteristic Turkish name of Sakal Tutan Dere-si—The Valley where they catch hold of your beard.

It was about ten in the morning when we were greeted by horsemen sent out by the *Mudir*, local Governor of Mandalī, the last town within Turkish territory. Soon more and more riders appeared, most of them mounted on beautiful Arab mares and conspicuous in their gay costumes and fine trappings. Among these was the Mudir himself—Nomān Efendi, a polite and amiable gentleman from Baghdad. In the midst of this picturesque cavalcade we entered the small town of Mandalī, where the Mudir received me in his house and made me acquainted with the dignitaries of his district assembled in his reception-room. After the usual small cups of coffee and innumerable cigarettes had been consumed, the Mudir dismissed the other guests and led me and Mr. P. on to the flat roof of his house, where, under an awning of mats, an excellent lunch was served. On the parapets of his roof were six storks' nests, and we could watch the young storks showing as much appetite for the snakes which their parents brought them as we did for the Mudir's excellent lunch. I remarked, by way of starting the conversation, that in my country the existence of a stork's nest on a house was considered as a sign that the house was inhabited by good people, and that it was

believed that lightning never struck a house that had a stork's nest on its roof. The Mudir said that this same belief had also been common in Mandalī until lately when a flash of lightning had slain a stork; but this, he said, was explained in the following manner: The lightning had been ordered to strike the *Mufti*—Judge of Ecclesiastical Law—who had been described to him as having a white head, a black body and red feet—meaning the white turban, the black cloak and the red sandals. In his great haste the lightning had mistaken the stork for the *Mufti* and had killed him. Nomān Efendi was an entertaining and pleasant host. He told me many good stories, most of which, however, I do not remember. But when I remarked that the town of Mandalī had made a pleasant impression on me, and that I imagined that his sojourn there was probably an agreeable one, he answered: 'Don't say that. The people of Mandalī are the greatest rogues and scoundrels in the world. They are composed mainly of Kurds, Lurrs, Arabs and Turks; and they are divided as far as religion goes into Shiahs and Sunnis, who are always at loggerheads. Only this morning, it being the great Shiah festival of Muharram, there has been violent fighting between the Shiahs and the Sunnis, in which four people have been killed and many wounded. It is impossible for anyone to govern these people, be he ever so well disposed towards them. Some time ago,' he continued, 'there was a Mudir here who was the very ideal of a good ruler. He drank no alcohol, kept his fast, performed his five prayers daily, took no bribes or presents, was always mild and just and gave his ear to every complaint in this district. The people of Mandalī, who are accustomed always to complain of their Governors, were in despair because they did not know what to say against this excellent man. At last one of them proposed the following proceeding: The Governor's Kurdish groom was to be induced by money to teach his master's

mare to eat eggs. This was done by leaving the mare without food and drink for a day, and then giving her a pail in which one raw egg had been beaten. This dose was gradually increased until the mare had become accustomed to swallow forty eggs every morning. Now a *Mazbata*—a petition—was set up in which it was said that the oppression at the hands of the Governor had attained such a degree that there were hardly any chickens left in the country—the Governor's mare having been fed with forty eggs daily. This petition was signed by almost all the notables, and by a great number of the illiterate inhabitants, who used their inked fingers for seals. When this *Mazbata* reached Constantinople the authorities were very much puzzled. They thought it best to send a *Mufattish*—a commissioner of inquiry—to Mandalī to examine the case. When this gentleman arrived he was hospitably received and entertained by the Mudir, who was very much astonished when after dinner his guest told him the object of his visit. "How is it possible," he said, "that a horse should eat eggs? I take my refuge to God and rely upon him." "Well," said the *Mufattish*, "that is a matter to be seen. Have your mare brought here and let us see whether she will devour forty eggs." Of course this was the case, and the righteous Mudir was at once dismissed the service.'

When my kind host had finished telling me this and other stories, which may have had more poetical than actual truth, I urged him to help me to organize my march into the country of the Lurrs. But he warned me most earnestly not to expose myself to the dangers of such an undertaking. It was only when I insisted, that he took me to the house of the Persian Agent, Nāsir Bey, who also strongly advised me to desist from the undertaking. 'But,' he said, 'if you really want to go, there is a gang of Lurrs here now who are going to Amleh. They are escorting two ladies of their master's household who have been in Baghdad to consult

a physician. If you like, you can have a talk with them.' In the meantime I found, sitting on a stone bench in the hall, ten fierce-looking fellows all armed to the teeth, with the exception of one in white robes and with a white turban. He was the person entrusted with the care of the graves of the reigning family at Najaf, where pious Shiahs sent the remains of their dead to repose in holy earth near the sepulchre of their great Imam Ali, son-in-law of the Prophet. This man was called by the others the Mayor of the City of the Silent. He was a great fanatic and very difficult to deal with. But the real leader of the gang was a negro named Lāchīn, a smoker of bhang and a drinker of arac, but at the same time a brave man and a loyal servant of his master. The rest were young fellows, who at first showed no respect for me nor for the Persian Agent. The two youngest were boys of about twelve and ten years of age. They carried Martini-Henry rifles and their dark woolly tunics were covered, like those of the others, with well-stocked pouches for cartridges. The men treated my request rather as a joke, but ultimately consented to take me along with them to Amleh, where their master lived. It was arranged that they should fetch me at my camp at midnight, as it was too hot to march in the middle of the day.

I had sent my people and my camp to a water-mill outside the town where the stream afforded a little coolness. I now rode out there myself and invited the Persian Agent to dine with me and spend the night. Nāsir Bey did everything that was in his power to help me to come to terms with the Lurrs; but, not being quite sure that they would keep their word, I had taken him out with me and meant to keep him as a kind of hostage, in case there were difficulties. After dinner we had tea served in the Persian fashion in small glasses, and smoked the Persian water-pipe, while my guest told me many entertaining things about the people and country I was going to visit, and about the history of the

Lurrs. It was not worth while pitching our tents, and we preferred sleeping under the open sky by the murmuring brook that turned the mill. I only expressed my apprehension that we might be tormented by mosquitoes, but Nāsir Bey said: 'If you put your bed on this little hill you will have no mosquitoes at all because the wind, being the enemy of the mosquito, will drive it away. You know,' he continued, 'the judgment of Solomon with regard to the wind and the mosquito? One day the mosquito appeared before the throne of Solomon, who, as you know, was king of djinns and of beasts, and said, "I have come to lodge a complaint against the wind. Wherever I go the wind pursues me and drives me away. He hinders me carrying out my profession and consuming the food allotted to me. I beg your Majesty to give a verdict that the wind shall make good the damages done to me and desist from troubling me any longer." King Solomon, on hearing this complaint, sunk his head into the collar of reflection. After awhile, however, he said, "Bring the wind before me; I wish to confront the two adversaries." The moment the wind appeared the mosquito vanished, and King Solomon—upon whom be peace—escaped the obligation of passing a judgment which would have been difficult to formulate, and more difficult still to carry out.'

As Nāsir Bey had predicted, we were not molested by mosquitoes and slept until midnight, when our muleteers began to stir and load their mules. There was, however, no trace of the Lurrs. Hour after hour passed without anything happening. From time to time one of Nāsir Bey's sons came out from town and whispered long tales into his father's ears, who answered my inquisitive looks by ever-new evasions. It got light; the sun rose; it grew hot; the good marching time had passed, and still no trace of the Lurrs. Nāsir Bey offered to go to town himself to look after matters; but this I opposed because if once he had gone I would most

likely have heard no more of him or of his people. At length I made up my mind to change the tone of amiability to that of severity. 'Now, I don't want to be fooled any more, I am not asking what has happened; I only want to know whether you in your innermost mind think that the Lurrs will come, or whether you think that they will not come. I don't want any more subterfuges; I want a clear answer, yes or no, to my question.' I held him by the button and tried to make him see that this time he had to speak up clearly. I was very angry, though of course Nāsir Bey was probably quite innocent. At last he opened his mouth and gave me an answer very characteristic of the Persian mind. 'A man once asked Aristotle whether bears laid eggs or whether they brought forth living cubs. Aristotle answered: "According to all the laws of nature known to us, and according to the teachings of experience, there ought to be no doubt that bears bring forth living cubs and do not lay eggs; but who can take any responsibility for what these tailless monsters might not be up to?" It is the same with the Lurrs. If they lead you to Amleh, they can be sure of being handsomely rewarded by you, and it is no trouble for them to let you go along with them; but I can no more predict what they will do than Aristotle could say about the bears laying eggs.'

I was disarmed, and gave orders to pitch a tent for shade, when suddenly the cavalcade of Lurrs appeared in the distance. We at once packed up and left. I rode ahead and caught them up and upbraided them for their unpunctuality which obliged me to march during the hottest hours of the day, through an absolutely barren stony wilderness. When we reached the first rocky hills of the mountain range they stopped their caravan and I pitched the top of a tent like a big umbrella. There they soon joined me and had tea with me, even the Mayor of the City of the Silent partaking of my hospitality. The Turkish escort, led by a very warlike-looking Yuz-

bāshi (Captain) here took leave of me, assuring me that we had practically reached the frontier. After receiving their usual tip, they left me with many good wishes for my further journey. Near sunset we started, riding towards a narrow gorge cut in the steep hill-side. Our patrol consisted of a venerable *Tūshmāl*, or chief, with a long pointed black beard, two young men, Mirza Bey and Muhammad Bey, and the twelve-year-old boy, besides myself. Suddenly one of the young men, Muhammad Bey, cantered up to me and said: 'What is your name?' I said 'Sulaiman', which is the Arabic equivalent to Friedrich. 'Sulaiman,' he said, 'load your *Abu Khamse*,'—Father of Five (meaning my carbine). 'But what is the matter?' I asked. 'Follow me!' All the men mounted on horses started in a fierce gallop over stones and rocks up and down in the most reckless manner. As they were all mounted on mares it would have been impossible to rein in our stallions, who seemed to enjoy the escapade. We crossed a rocky ravine and then went up a steep hill-side till near the top. There we pulled up and dismounted and crept carefully on foot to the top of the ridge until we could overlook the country beyond. At the bottom of the valley we saw Lāchīn, the negro, walking alone along the path, holding his rifle in readiness. As soon as he had passed the mouth of the gorge, Muhammad Bey turned to me, saying: 'Unload your carbine and lead your horse down the hill. There is no more danger here. You are now our friend and our comrade at arms. You would have fought with us if we had found the Beni Lām lying in ambush, but now we are quite safe.' When I expressed some doubt about the danger having been really so great, Muhammad Bey showed me a number of rough stones erected over the graves of men who had been killed here. One of these graves was that of his father. The name of this locality is *Dūshakhwā*,—the Ridge of the Pass.

Having reached the plain we mounted our horses to

catch up Lāchīn. The ground gave a hollow sound under the hoofs of our horses. It is called *Dasht-i Rumma-rum-kara*,—the plain that makes a sound like a kettle-drum. Another patrol which had gone to the left also joined us, and the feeling of safety was now so great that the *Tūshmāl* gave us a song which sounded not unlike the distant howling of a wolf. But this Lurrish song proved, when it was translated into Persian for me, to be a delicate love-song. The night by this time had closed in and our path was lighted only by the waning moon.

After awhile we again entered a ravine, but the rocks here were not high and the path was quite smooth. I dismounted to get some food out of my saddle-bags and to tighten the girths. In the meantime our little caravan had disappeared round the corner of the hill-side. This was disagreeable in so far as we had to cross a small salt river covered with efflorescences of salt and saltpetre. Not finding the exact place where the others had crossed, I chose a likely spot, but after a few paces my horse broke through the crust of salt and sank deep into the briny morass. Happily the salt bore me and I could regain the bank, holding the bridle of my horse in my hand. The animal, which was neck-deep in the mud, struggled for some time to extricate itself and at last succeeded in getting back on to firm ground. Herr P. and I did not now like to risk another attempt to cross the white field of salt, and we shouted for our guides. These, however, by this time had got out of hearing, and nothing remained for us but to fire a few shots. Almost immediately the Lurrs came galloping towards us. They had been very much alarmed by the firing, thinking that we had been ambushed. They led us across the ford and we soon reached the rest of the party, when we had to submit to a sound scolding by all the Lurrs, including the two ladies, for the careless manner in which we had lagged behind. The reproof was really well deserved, especially as the most dangerous spot of

the whole track lay immediately in front of us. This was a marshy little valley surrounded by rocks, in the reeds of which brigands used to find a convenient hiding-place. The name of this locality was '*Aleihum*,'—Upon them! After we had passed this place the military precautions were dropped, but it was not until three in the morning that we reached the Persian frontier. We halted to refresh ourselves with a drink of deliciously cool water. This locality bears the name of Gūr-i Sag, —the Dog's Grave. I was told that about thirty years before the Lurrs had killed and buried a dog here, swearing that they would not give up fighting their hereditary enemy, the Arab tribe of Beni Lām, until they had entirely routed them. Otherwise they were willing to die and be buried like that dog. The victory had been won under the leadership of Hussein Kuli Khan, the now aged ruler of the Feilī Lurrs.

Up to this point the Turkish escort ought to have accompanied us. The instinct of self-preservation induced them to turn back before the dangerous part of the road began. The Turkish Yuzbāshi, or captain, in command of the escort had excused himself, alleging that the frontier was quite close at hand. In his politeness he went so far as to change the name of *Gūr-i Sag* into *Gūr-i Sang*,—the Stone Grave. The Turks were much too polite to mention an unclean animal or the like in the august presence of as high a dignitary as a Consul. I remember that once in Jerusalem a Turkish speaking cavass who had to bring me a donkey I had bought, only talked of this animal as a means of transport, markab, which in Arabic is generally used for steamer. The Turkish word for donkey, *eshek*, would never have passed his lips in the presence of a Consul.

Having ascended the gentle elevation on the other side of the Dog's Grave, we were allowed to rest for an hour and a half, until 4.30, for the waning moon was setting and the dawn had not yet announced the coming

day. A large flock of sheep was passing the night there, guarded by one unarmed shepherd. We were also told to pack up our rifles, for here, in the Old Man's territory, we were quite safe. We were in the saddle again before sunrise and gradually ascended the first chain of hills. At ten in the morning, after having crossed a stream called *Guār-khush*, of agreeable taste (i.e. not a salt river), we reached the green plain of *Sarnei*,—The Reeds. Here there was ample water, a few fields under cultivation and pleasant lawns on the banks of a deep brook. I indulged in a refreshing bath, which, however, was somewhat disturbed by a number of whitish snakes shooting forth from all sides and hissing at me. Happily I knew that freshwater snakes are not poisonous and made the best of the rare luxury of a swim.

Meanwhile Hussein Kuli Khan's head-man of this little oasis had a black tent brought to the side of the brook. It was carried as it had stood on its poles by its nomad owners. After a good meal and a rest in the shade of the tent, we continued our march through rough country until we reached the plain of Valiābād, where we were welcomed by another of Hussein Kuli Khan's agents, a pleasant young man, Fat-hā Khān. The plain was fairly well cultivated, as there was plenty of water, by Lurrs who lived scattered over it in several small nomad camps. Here we noticed that P.'s groom was missing. Fat-hā Khān's men found him in one of those camps, but he was too ill to come to us. It was only on the following morning, just as we were starting, that he was brought to us, apparently in a dying condition. He could not sit upright nor was he able to keep down the medicine or brandy which I tried to administer to him. There remained nothing but to leave him to the care of his nomad hosts, who promised to look after him. I regretted that it had not been possible for me to stay with the sick man, but all, Persians and Arabs, were unanimous in declaring that that would have been use-

less, the hour of death—*ajal*—being fixed once for all in the Beginning. Against this decree there was no help in medicine. Soon we were overtaken by a horseman sent after us by Fat-hā Khān to tell us that the unfortunate man was dead and had been buried.

Our path now led us through a picturesque gorge, where we were greeted by a fox standing on a rock quite near us, into the higher ranges of the mountains. This gorge looked like a beautiful park watered by a clear stream, with its rich oleander bushes in full blossom, not unlike those that line the tributaries of the Jordan in Eastern Palestine. As we ascended the pass the hills on all sides showed more and more rich vegetation, mostly oak and terebinth, until we found ourselves in a real forest. On the horizon on our right was the highest range of the Zagros Mountains, now called *Kabīr Kūh*. It rose dark blue with its snow-clad crest above the pale green of the Persian oak-trees. The scenery of woods, springs and mountains was fascinating.

We were made to halt at a spring called Mār burra, the Snake Cutter or perhaps Snake Cut. Here we indulged in a scanty lunch, as we had obtained no provisions at Valiābād. The Old Man had had that place looted a few days before our arrival as a punishment for some misdeed. The people were by no means indignant at this treatment, for such is the Prince's right. A horseman came to greet us in the name of Hussein Kuli Khan, to whom we had sent our letters of recommendation, and told us the Prince had sent his Vazir and his cousin to meet us. After passing the rocky *Gatchān* Pass we found these two dignitaries sitting under an oak tree. The Vazir, a wild but dignified-looking man with a flowing dark beard, and the cousin a grey-bearded, very old man, both clad in dark garments of roughly spun wool and both armed with rifles and showing the usual display of cartridges, were very civil and spoke good Persian as well as Baghdadi Arabic.

CHAPTER V

Expedition to Pusht-i Kūh (*continued*)—Grand Scenery—Town of Tents—The Old Man of the Mountain—Lavish Hospitality

FROM the top of a still higher pass, *Lammarī*, we enjoyed a splendid panorama, including the whole chain of the Kabīr Kūh which stretches as far as Dizfūl on the Kārūn River. Soon we could also overlook the valley of *'Amleh*, the summer quarters of the Feilī Lurrs. The whole valley was dotted with black tents. The Prince also lived in one of them, although he had built a summer palace for himself. A magnificent white Persian tent had been pitched for us on a mound overlooking the nomad camp. It covered a space of 15 square metres and consisted of a double tent, the inside one being arranged as our dwelling-place, while the passage between this and the outer tent served for our baggage and stores. The inner tent was lined with fine *Isfahan kalamkār*, a hand-painted chintz. The floor was covered with fine Persian rugs. A magnificent round table of carved ebony with corresponding chairs served for our meals. Another spacious tent had been provided for Ajīl and for our servants. We were not permitted to use our own tents nor any of our provisions. Everything we wanted was amply provided for, and we were asked to state any wishes with regard to further supplies.

We were now entertained with coffee made with the aid of a silver *samovar* and then with water from a spring cooled with snow. I wished to pay my respects to my princely host, but the Vazir managed to draw the con-

versation on until the Prince himself appeared. I went out to meet him and helped him to dismount. He was a tall very old man with a long, flowing beard tinged red with *henna* and above this dark blue with *rang* (indigo). He wore a small felt cap and turban of black and gold silk. His eyesight appeared to be very bad and he gladly let me lead him by the hand into the tent. With him appeared his son, the *Mīr Panj*,—Commander of five thousand,—and several of his grandees. He refused to partake of our coffee. I was told that he took neither tea nor coffee and that he ate very little. He lived almost entirely on arac, a very strong liquor made out of dates; but he never lost his wits. He had a sinister look which made it easy for us to believe that he frequently had the hands, the feet or the heads of his subjects cut off. But probably a wild nation like the Lurrs would be difficult to keep in such order and discipline without drastic methods of government. The whole camp of Amleh was his personal property and all its inhabitants were his servants and his soldiers. When the signal of alarm was sounded, 1,500 horsemen, all armed with breech-loading rifles and from 100 to 300 cartridges for each, were supposed to sit in the saddle within fifteen minutes. With this force he held his own against the turbulent tribes in Persia and on Turkish territory, especially the ever hostile Beni Lām Arabs. His eldest son, the *Mīr Panj*, was a young man with the countenance of a falcon. Hussein Kuli Khan conversed with me at first in Arabic and then in Persian on politics, on military questions, on shooting and on horses. At the same time he carried on governmental affairs, as all Oriental rulers are wont to do, including Turkish Pashas. He repeatedly assured me that everything he had was at my disposal. In case I was not well served by his subordinates, I was to tell him. But this I should under no circumstances have done, for he might have had the culprit slaughtered in front of my tent!

Near sunset he left me with his retinue, and we ascended a small hillock near our tents to enjoy the view. The tops of the high mountains—the *Manisht Kūh* to the north and the *Kabīr Kūh* to the east—were still gilded by the setting sun. To the west the dark silhouette of a stupendous and in parts perpendicular rock attracted our attention. Its name is *Qal'a-i Qirān*, —the Asphalt Castle. It is supposed to consist of asphalt or of coal. The southern horizon was formed by the wooded hills over which we had come. The whole valley was filled with the black tents of the nomads, now overhung by a thin blue cloud of smoke. The whole was a wonderful and beautiful sight.

The cold evening air drove us back into our tent. We also wanted to look after our dinner, but were told that we were not even allowed to use one lump of sugar of our own. A present of four large sugar-loaves and a tin of tea had already been brought to us. Now we were to say when we wished to dine, and dinner would be served. The *farrāsh bāshī*, or head of the carpet-spreaders, covered the table with a large Cashmere shawl, and very soon half a dozen men, led by the Vazir, set twenty-two dishes besides a number of flat loaves before us. Of these a few were baked of wheat, a rarity and a luxury, in our honour. The rest were made of the flour of acorns and looked and tasted like very good brown bread. The dishes contained the usual Persian food, rice dishes of different kinds with stews of lamb or chicken, white cheese with fragrant herbs and large bowls of *dūgh*—butter-milk—and sherbets of lemon with quince or of pomegranate juice. The quality was equal to the quantity. After we had finished, the meal was served to our retinue, some of whom probably had never tasted anything so good in their lives. I remonstrated with the Vazir for this excess of hospitality. But his only answer was: 'Next time I will bring twice as much.' This threat was almost

literally carried out. Besides the dishes enumerated we were treated every day to venison, especially ibex, wild goat and *argali* or moufflon, the wild mountain sheep. The meat of the latter, when roasted on a spit in the Oriental fashion, is, I think, the best I have ever tasted.

Of course tea, coffee and kalyāns, the Persian water-pipe, were constantly served to us and to our visitors.

CHAPTER VI

Discovery of Summer Residence of the Caliphs of Baghdad—Snakes—The Asphalt Castle—Visiting the Town of Tents—Nomad Chief as 'Officier de l'Instruction Publique'

Amleh,
June 10th, 1898.

WE have spent a whole week here, much more than we had originally intended. In the East—and perhaps not exclusively in the East—a guest is his host's prisoner. I fear some difficulty in getting away. The Prince's hospitality has not diminished, but, unfortunately, it can hardly be said to be extended to our horses. There is practically no barley and hardly any chopped straw to be obtained. So we are told; but I have my suspicion that this is a bit of the Vazir's private politics. He very much admires my two thoroughbred Arab stallions, and would like to utilize their presence for improving his breed of so-called Gulf Arabs. He pretends he wants to buy one of them at a fabulous price, but he says he can only do so if he takes him for a ride without my accompanying him. He hinted that after that ride it would be less difficult to obtain barley. If I allowed one of my stallions to be used by the Vazir, it would probably be unfit for riding where mares are near. Both my own riding-horses have the advantage of being young and *jāhil* (ignorant). It is painful to me to see my pet animals starving while we are being treated to an exaggerated quantity of luxurious food.

We have seen comparatively little of the Old Man

of the Mountain, but have heard a good deal about the prowesses of his younger days and his qualities as a ruler. He is undoubtedly a very strong personality. On Monday, the 6th of June, just after our lunch, the Vazir came to ask us to have a ride with the Prince. He had gone on in front, but we soon caught him up and rode with him to the foot of the *Manisht* Mountain. Here he had laid out an extensive garden in which he had built two large houses in the style of the villas of Shimran near Teheran. This place was called Husseinabad to perpetuate his name. We had tea on the borders of a pond. I was asked many questions about Germany and about Europe in general, but all I said seemed to be received with a certain scepticism. On a walk over the grounds we picked cherries and almonds from trees planted by the Old Man. When I told him that in the event of my having to spend another summer in Baghdad I should like my family to spend the hottest months in this delightful locality, he at once placed his houses and gardens at my disposal. This turn of our conversation appeared to me to be the right moment for showing him my gratitude for his hospitality by giving him my carbine (Model 88) with 100 rounds of ammunition. I knew the enormous value these mountaineers attribute to modern fire-arms, and he accepted my gift with many thanks. He had not quite believed what I had told him about the percussion of my carbine and had it tried on a very thick old willow tree. Of course the bullet went through the trunk as if it had been a sheet of paper.

I was, perhaps, rash in thus disarming myself while staying among these barbarians. And, at the same time, I had to give up the idea of bringing my family to Husseinabad on account of the incredible quantity of snakes that infested the place. As I walked across some bushes and brambles to look after my horses, almost at every step a snake wriggled out of my way. This was not

only the case in the well-watered grounds of Husseinabad, but also in the place where my tent was pitched. I even discovered a snake-hole within my tent, and there were traces of its inmates having come out of it at night-time. It seemed quite possible that many of these snakes were harmless, but how was I to ascertain that? When I asked the Vazir, he shrugged his shoulders and remarked: 'The yellow dog is the jackal's brother.'

I rode with the Vazir all round the gardens admiring the many beautiful springs which emerged there. Above Husseinabad I at last found the ruins of the summer resort of the Caliphs which I had come to look for. I discovered the tomb of one of them, *Mahdi*, the father of the famous Hārūn ar Rashīd. These ruins are now called *Dīvāla*, a name which the Lurrs derive from the Persian *dih-i bālā*, the upper village. This was undoubtedly the summer residence of the Abbaside Caliphs of Baghdad.

The whole way back to Amleh, about one parasang, or six kilometres, I rode with Hussein Kuli Khan at a walking pace, while the Mīr Panj and the other young men from time to time went off at a mad gallop, firing their rifles at white stones or other improvised targets. The enjoyment in watching this sport is an acquired taste. When the bullets whizzed past my ears and I asked one of the party whether there were not occasional casualties, he only answered: 'Seldom.'

On the 7th of June we rode to the Asphalt Castle which I have mentioned before. Seen from a distance it looks like the ruin of some giant castle, but it is the remnant of a high mountain formed and partly destroyed by a great volcanic eruption. The deep valley into which a part of the mountain has probably sunk is filled with a bituminous matter which is easily broken and burns very well, better than the bituminous stone called *hajar Mūssā* near the Dead Sea in Palestine. This black bitumen is covered by grey ashes out of which the trees

grow. We rested under the shade of an oak, but it was unpleasantly hot, and our horses suffered from the stings of innumerable horse-flies.

Much of our time at Amleh was spent in discussing a sort of commercial arrangement which P. wished to conclude with the ruler of Pusht-i Kūh with regard to the principal product of his realm, tragant, the resin of a small thorny bush, possibly identical with or closely related to the camel-thorn of the plains. This resin is gained by an incision being made in the stem of the bush at night. The resin that oozes forth, in a spiral shape, is hardened by the air and can be collected in the morning. This material is used in the weaving industry in Europe and constitutes an important article of export from Southern Persia and from Baghdad. But the Vazir dragged out the conversations until he had acquired absolute certainty that he had consumed the last drop of my small, and P.'s considerable, provision of alcohol; and in the end the many long discussions had no other result than this.

I had noticed that I was not supposed to walk about in the city of black tents that stretched in front of our camp. But in the long run I could not resist the temptation to visit the capital. It is said to consist of 3,000 tents scattered over the wooded valley between oaks, terebinths and wild almond trees. Assuming the average number of dwellers of each tent to be five, the population of this lightly built town would amount to about 15,000 inhabitants. In all likelihood Amleh is the largest nomad camp of the world. Amongst these black tents there are shops, smithies, weaving factories, saddleries and the like. Of public buildings I saw only one—the prison. Here about fifteen men were lying in heavy chains, the links of which were made of iron as thick as a man's wrist. These prisoners offered a picture of appalling misery. P., who knew nothing of Persian matters, asked what crimes those people had committed.

The answer was: 'Why crimes? A man is not put to prison because he has done something, but because he is to pay something.'

I have mentioned before that the whole 'town' can be dismembered and loaded on pack-animals. This is done every autumn when the Feilī Lurrs move to their winter quarters in lower and warmer regions.

Hussein Kuli Khan paid me several visits in the tent he had placed at my disposal. But he did not wish me to return his call, ostensibly on account of the women, but in reality, I think, he did not want us to see the simplicity of his household which he preferred to the comfort and to the luxury he might have indulged in. On the occasion of one of these visits I told him the names of men of his tribe mentioned by Layard in his *Early Travels and Adventures* and asked him whether he remembered them. With the aid of his aged cousin, the one who had come to meet me, all the names could be identified. This is a good proof for the veracity of Layard's narrative.

One day the Prince produced a small leather case and a paper and asked me to write down a literal Persian translation of the document in his presence. It was a French *décret* by which the Prince was appointed *officier de l'instruction publique* and the case contained the *insignia* of this dignity, two palm leaves set with small diamonds. There was nothing to be done but to translate this literally, which I did without showing merriment. But my translation by no means satisfied him. 'What does that mean, sāhib mensab-i ta'līm-i 'umūmī? What is it that I have become through this nomination? Is it an honorary title or is it a decoration? What am I to do with it?' I told him it was a distinction of the kind for which high-placed and honourable men in Europe would demean themselves and not shrink from the basest acts of begging and of flattery. No doubt the French Republic had wished to acknowledge the assistance Hussein

Kuli Khan had given to the scientific expedition of the French archaeologists de Morgan and M. Dieulafoy to the ruins of Susa.

I exchanged visits with Hussein Kuli Khan's two sons. I have already mentioned the elder one, the Mīr Panj. Besides his skill as a horseman and a rifleman, he possessed some of the knowledge and culture of Persian townspeople. The younger one, a youth of eighteen, was only a nomad. According to old Persian custom, which you know from the time you read Xenophon's *Anabasis*, these two brothers hated one another and only waited for their father's death to fall upon one another. Each one had his own camp and retinue and each one pursued his own political ends, which were not confined to the principality of Pusht-i Kūh. The more we learnt about the inner affairs of the Camp City the more we saw what an appalling nest of intrigues it was. The dynasty would not be able to maintain itself if it were not protected by a guard of black slaves who enjoy the confidence of the Chief, these negroes being the only members of the community who are debarred from aspiring to supreme power. They are allowed to fill high offices and to enjoy considerable emoluments. But as a recompense for their fidelity they demanded one thing: white women. The fulfilment of this desire must, in the long run, have a disastrous effect on the fine and purely Aryan race of the Lurrs.

CHAPTER VII

RETURNING TO BAGHDAD—ROBBERY—INTELLIGENCE OF THOROUGHBRED ARAB HORSES—THE LURRS IN HISTORY AND IN LITERATURE

BAGHDAD,
June 18th, 1898.

ON the eve of our departure from Amleh, which we had fixed for the 12th of June, the Prince sent me, as a present of honour, two young mules. Their names are *Kurra Fīl*, Elephant's Foal, and *Ahū*, Gazelle. Their graceful build and their sleek coats are pleasant to behold, but here I cannot make any use of them. They were brought to me by the second son of the Prince. I uncorked the last bottle of whisky which I had hidden from the Vazir in a locked box. I had meant to give him a strong peg, but the youth held his tumbler out until it was full, emptied it at one draught, and held it out again. He consumed the contents of the bottle in one sitting without showing any sign of intoxication.

Early on the 12th P. started, escorted by five horsemen, on his way to Kirmānshāh over very rough mountain tracks hitherto not trodden by any European, while I had to return by the same way as I had come to the burning plain of Mesopotamia. The heat was now intense, but the first march across the wooded hills was not unpleasant. I had the same escort as before under the leadership of Lāchīn, the negro whose good qualities I had reason to appreciate. He was careful and at the same time quite fearless. Wherever there was supposed to be any danger, he exposed himself to it and showed a great sense of re-

sponsibility for the safety and well-being of the caravan entrusted to him. Only at night he relapsed into his habit of taking opium and, whenever circumstances allowed of it, alcohol. Before I left the oak woods near the spring of Mārburra he invited me to lunch. When asked where he could obtain provisions in this wilderness he merely pointed to a flock of sheep. Forthwith two young men galloped towards the sheep and selected one of them which, in less than half an hour, was skinned and roasted on an improvised grill. The poor shepherd's tears and objurgations were of no avail, and when the odour of roast meat reached him, he sat down to eat with us, making the best of the rare luxury.

Lāchīn complimented me on my walking down the steep passes as the Lurrs did. He said he had never before seen an '*ādam-i shahristānī*'—a townsman—able to walk such a distance. He and his companions, who admitted being highway robbers, were also very much impressed by my taking part in this expedition with them quite unarmed. But I answered: 'My rifle and ammunition are in the hands of your lord,' and they nodded assent, proud that I evidently felt quite safe among them.

When we reached the plain on the morning of our second march a blaze of heat struck our faces with such intensity that we had to seek shelter under a nomad tent and resolved only to march at night.

We camped again at the mill of *Ahmad Aghā* near Mandalī, where I received your letters dated the 8th of May. While I was sitting under the umbrella of my tent entertaining the many visitors who had come to greet me, my bay horse was being shod. Irritated by horse-flies, it suddenly made a movement with its leg and the nails sticking out of its hoof made an ugly wound in its other leg. I had the limping animal led to *Baladrūz*, where my Greek friend, Kyriakos, offered to keep it until it was quite fit to proceed. I left my excellent Bedouin groom, Khumayyis, to look after it

and bring it to Baghdad when its wound should be healed. This had to be done by night marches on account of the great heat, which had now set in in good earnest. But in the meantime the season of *ghazus* had begun, and the plain was infested by raiding parties of Bedouins, who were on the look-out for isolated caravans of merchants or of pilgrims. Whilst the more important *ghazus* are executed by camel-riders, the ordinary ones are carried on by small parties on horseback. Only mares are used on these occasions, because stallions would be likely to betray their presence by neighing. Now Khumayyis was very much concerned lest he should encounter one of these raiding parties and have to return to Baghdad without my precious Arab, who was likely to neigh at the approach of a number of mares. In order to escape from such an eventuality, Khumayyis, whenever he heard the report of horses' hoofs by laying his ear on the ground, would lead the horse away from the beaten track until the danger had passed. The horse would obey him although led only by its halter. But on one occasion the animal refused to leave the track and its rider had to face the supposed danger before he could put on the bridle. But soon his apprehensions proved futile, for the deep sound of a caravan bell showed him that the approaching party were not Bedouins but peaceful dealers. This event, Khumayyis told me when at length he reached Baghdad, proves the intellectual superiority of the thoroughbred Arab horse over the ordinary stock. In fact, my stallion had a pedigree which after enumerating a long list of noble sires ended with the words: 'min khail en Nabī',—of the horses of the Prophet (Muhammad).

In the meantime I had continued my own marches back towards Baghdad not without further mishaps. All my followers were taken ill in consequence of the great heat. Ajīl, the famous drawing-room Bedouin, had lost all his swagger since our arrival at Amleh.

There the Prince of whose intimate friendship he had boasted had hardly looked at him, only asking him what shabby business he had come there for. Now he was quite prostrate, wailing and complaining and declaring that he could not go on any further. His picturesque Bedouin headgear he had replaced by an improvised night-cap. His sufferings were, however, no more imaginary than those of the other men. Perhaps this made them less careful in looking after the horses. At Baakūba, the last stage before Baghdad, I lost my very strong and useful grey horse, *Abu Hamām*, which was ridden by my cavass, from an attack of colic.

Under these circumstances I did not want to expose my men and the remaining animals to unnecessary fatigue and told them to take their time in marching to town, while I drove back on a kind of dog-cart drawn by mules. When I arrived at the Consulate towards evening I found Mrs. P., my travelling companion's wife, in great distress. I had allowed her to use the Consulate for a change of air on account of the ill-health of her baby. Now she insisted on leaving the house before nightfall, and would hardly listen to the account of her husband's adventures and further travelling plans. She knew that her child was dying and wanted to be alone at her house with it. By sunrise on the following morning the child was dead and buried. It was very difficult in those days to bring up European children in Baghdad. Few of them outlived the first summer.

Now you most likely will want to know a little more of the Lurrs, a nation whose name you may never have heard. They are an Iranian tribe which may be said to form, like that of their cousins the Bakhtiaris, a part of the Kurdish nationality. The two dialects into which their language is divided are closely connected with that of the Kurds. The educated Lurrs all know Persian; Arabic and Turkish are familiar to many. They are divided into several sections of which the *Feilī* in the

south and the *Zand* in the north are the most prominent. The latter have played an important part in the history of Persia.

When in 1741 the great conqueror, Nādir Shah, was murdered in the plain of *Khabūshān* in North-East Persia, his whole army of more than 100,000 men was dispersed in all directions. Two of Nadir's camp followers gathered their tribesmen and finally founded new kingdoms. One was Ahmad Khān Abdālī, the creator of the kingdom of Afghanistan, the other was Karīm Khān, Nadir Shah's equerry, who after having appropriated his master's saddles and bridles set with the most valuable jewels and worth several millions, managed to reach his home in Southern Persia with a number of followers mostly belonging to his tribe, the Zand Lurrs. He made himself master of the fertile province of Fars with its capital, Shiraz, which had suffered much from wars and earthquakes. He rebuilt the famous old city and restored it to its former splendour. From there he conquered the greater part of Persia with the exception of the Caspian provinces, and created a large military camp at Teheran, the present capital of Persia. He never assumed the title of Shah, but called himself *Vakīl*—lieutenant—governing in the name of the last of the Imāms, Mahdī, who was and is still supposed to be hidden at Sāmira, near Baghdad. He built strong fortifications to protect Shiraz, and adorned it with beautiful buildings. The bāzār-i Vakīl is the finest I have seen in Persia. They say that he ordered musicians to play and sing to his workmen in order to make their hard work more pleasant. Karīm Khān is remembered as the best and, at all events, the most humane of all rulers of Persia. After his death a long struggle ensued between his descendants and *Agha Muhammad Khan*, the fierce eunuch who founded the Kājār dynasty which reigned from 1779 to 1923.

The Lurrs have also given a popular poet to Persian

literature, Bābā Tāhir-i Lurrs, who lived in the eleventh century and, like his contemporary Omar Khayyám, composed quatrains. Bābā Tāhir's verses are much more simple and naïve than Omar's. They are written in a Lurrs dialect which, however, differs little from the classical language. I found them very difficult to render in German verse, principally on account of their studied simplicity. This is the translation of one of them in English prose:

> The tulip on the hillside lasts a week,
> The violet by the edge of the brook lasts a week.
> I call it out from town to town:
> The fidelity of those whose cheeks are like the rose lasts but a week.

I saw Bābā Tāhir's tomb at Hamadan. His verses are still known and much quoted in all Persia.

CHAPTER VIII

Camping near the Ruins of Ctesiphon—Studying the History of Baghdad—Story about Fathalī, Shah of Persia—Writing the Book on Jews and Phoenicians

I WILL say little of the life during the hot summer months in Baghdad as it was in those days. Everyone spent the nights on the roof of his house, where a certain amount of cool air was often quite refreshing. Most of the day was spent in the *sardāb*, a half-subterranean vault, one side of which consisted of *agūl*, camel-thorn, which was constantly watered by a negro. The electric fan had not yet been introduced. In its stead the old-fashioned Indian *pankah* had to be pulled by an unfortunate individual seated on a high stool outside the *sardāb*. Towards evening most members of the small European colony assembled at the tennis court to get a little exercise. Riding was no longer a pleasure unless one was prepared to be back before sunrise. A story-teller whom I had engaged to tell me Arabian tales in the evenings proved unsatisfactory. This male Scheherazade was often so drunk that his stories became incoherent. But I was fortunate enough to find a curious Arabic book, written by a Sharīf of Medina and lithographed a long time ago in Bombay, about the history of Baghdad in the second half of the eighteenth and the first part of the nineteenth century. Its principal hero was Dāwūd Pasha, *Vāli* or Governor-General of the province of Baghdad, which in his days included the districts of Mossul and Basra. Of this rare and curious book I made a German translation.

This work gave me some insight into the development of Mesopotamia at a time when it was in very loose connection with, and under very limited control of, the Ottoman capital, a state of affairs which encouraged Dāwūd Pasha to aspire to the creation of a semi-independent State, as his more fortunate colleague Muhammad Ali Pasha had just done in Egypt. He began by holding back the taxes he had gathered and using the money to improve his armament. In December, 1830, the Porte had dispatched a *mufattish*, a High Commissioner, to Baghdad who was to induce the Vāli to pay his arrears. Dāwūd Pasha, suspecting that the commissioner had orders to fetch his head—a proceeding by no means unusual in Baghdad—thought it best to anticipate this plan and had him killed immediately after the welcome dinner. He then wrote to the Sultan begging him to excuse his proceeding and assuring him of his allegiance and devotion. These letters were graciously received by the Sultan in expectation of a large sum of money; but when this was not forthcoming Dāwūd Pasha was declared an outlaw, and Ali Pasha, Governor of Aleppo, was dispatched against the rebel at the head of a punitive expedition. Dāwūd Pasha, who had hidden his treasures with Bedouins, on whose devotion to him he counted, was betrayed by them, and his treasures were delivered to Ali Pasha. Soon after Ali Pasha entered Baghdad and Dāwūd was taken as a prisoner to Constantinople.

The rebel Governor who met with this sad and inglorious end had for many years played a considerable part in the politics of Western Asia. Like some of his predecessors, he had frequent conflicts with the Persians who aspired to the possession of the four great Shiah sanctuaries near Baghdad. At one time a war with Fath-ali Shah, the first Kājār King of Persia, seemed imminent. This calamity was avoided, thanks to the skill of a Christian emissary Dāwūd Pasha had sent to Teheran. I

learnt many details of this episode from this emissary's son, who paid me a visit. His name, like that of his father, was Kaspūr Khan. I asked him how he came by the Persian title of Khan and he told me about his father's mission to the resplendent court of the King of Persia. He not only succeeded in averting warlike complications, but also knew how to gain the friendship of the Shah, who kept him for some time at his court after the business had been transacted. 'One day', Kaspūr Khān related, 'my father was walking with Fathali Shah in the grounds of his newly erected palace, Kasr-Kadjar, on the road to Shimran when he saw a kran, a small silver coin at that time worth about a shilling, lying in the dust before his feet. To his amazement the Shah bent his august back, picked the coin up and began to clean it with the flap of his coat made of precious Cashmere shawl. When my father expressed his astonishment that so wealthy and powerful a monarch, King of Kings, Shadow of God, should stoop to pick up an object of such trifling value out of the dust and dirt of the road, Fathali Shah answered: "You will presently see how I am going to utilize this kran in the interest of the Imperial Treasury —may Allah fill it." The King then stopped a peasant who was conveying apples to the market of Teheran, gave him the kran and bought an ass's load of apples from him. Then he called his *Farrāsh Bāshī*, the head of the carpet-spreaders, and bade him place the apples on seven gold dishes and take them as a gift and a special token of his Imperial favour, to the seven highest dignitaries of the State. These, according to custom, had to acknowledge their master's act of gracious attention by sending him a sum of money amounting to not less than 100 tomans, or 1,000 krans each.'

I was at that time collecting materials for a study on modern Persian history, and, besides picking up characteristic anecdotes not to be found in any book, I found in the above-mentioned Arabic *History of Baghdad* many

PERSIAN LACQUER-WORK PAINTING

Time of Fathali Shah

(MUCH REDUCED IN SIZE)

valuable indications about the relations, both warlike and peaceful, of the later rulers of the Zand Dynasty, the successors of Karīm Khān, with Turkey and especially with the Turkish province of Mesopotamia.

But I gradually abandoned these studies and concentrated all my attention on a book about the Phoenicians and the Jews at the beginning of the Christian Era, which my father had begun to write and which I tried to complete after his death. As there was practically no official work for me to do in Baghdad, I wished to look for a camping-ground in the neighbourhood where I might be quite undisturbed. Deceived by a spell of cool weather at the beginning of September, I pitched my tents near the small village of Dadawīya, on the Tigris, about five miles below Baghdad and not far from the magnificent ruins of Ctesiphon. I chose this locality on account of a small forest of a kind of willow-trees stretching for a couple of miles along the river. There I had a hut built of bamboos and branches under some trees of sufficient height to throw their shadow on it. But I soon found that my move out of town was premature and that the heat returned for some time with unabated vigour. But the nights were very cool and the hut under the willow-trees afforded me sufficient shelter from the rays of the sun to enable me to work during the greater part of the day. There I revised all my notes for the book on the Phoenicians and the Jews, and put down the whole of it in writing. I shall have something more to say about this work in a subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER IX

ORDERED BACK TO TEHERAN—EXCURSION TO HILLAH AND KERBELĀ—RIDING OVER THE RUINS OF BABYLON—FAHAD, THE GREAT BEDOUIN CHIEF—KERBELĀ, THE GREAT SHIAH SANCTUARY—TIME MARRIAGES

ON the day after this preliminary work had been finished I received a telegram from Berlin ordering me to proceed to Teheran without delay. This put an end to my stay in Baghdad, and I looked forward to returning to a town where I could have my family with me and where I had many excellent friends. But I did not want to leave Mesopotamia without paying a visit to the ruins of Babylon, including what was then considered to be the famous Tower of Babel, and, if possible, the sacred city of Kerbelā.

This expedition, on which I was accompanied by the German Vice-Consul, Dr. H., and a sympathetic young Hungarian merchant, Herr W., was interesting in many ways, although the excavation of the ruins of Babylon by my countryman, Dr. Koldewey, had not yet been begun, so that all we saw of them was a long chain of hills formed by the débris of former buildings and by innumerable fragments of ancient pottery. As we rode along the crest of these mounds we knew that beneath our horses' hoofs were hidden the famous temples of Nebuchadnezzar and the palace in which Alexander the Great died attended by his beautiful Persian wife, Roxane.

At Hillah, on the Euphrates, we enjoyed the hospitality of an amiable Jewish family which placed a flat roof at our disposal. The two sons of the house surprised us

by speaking perfect German. They had received part of their education in Vienna. The ladies of the house did not show themselves, being kept secluded according to Oriental custom. From Hillah we visited *Birs Nimrūd*, Nimrod's Tower, a ruin erroneously identified with the Tower of Babel. From the top of the hill formed by the débris of bricks, each one of which bore an impression said to be that of Nebuchadnezzar, we could overlook the wide desert dotted with marshes and lakes up to the low hill on which the golden dome of Ali's tomb at Najaf was glittering in the sun.

We did not, however, contemplate paying a visit to that sanctuary, but wished to visit Kerbelā, the locality of the battle in which Hussein, the great saint and martyr, Ali's son, lost his life. On the way an interesting sight was reserved for us. We were struck by the great number of white camels grazing on the plain, which here is not so arid as on the other side of the Euphrates. This unusual mass of camels was due to the presence of Fahad Bey, the great Chief of the Aneze Bedouins, in the neighbourhood. I have mentioned before that the Aneze roam over the whole stretch of land on the right bank of the Euphrates and that they are the terror of the settled population 'from the gates of Damascus to the gates of Basra'. They live in perpetual feud with the Shammar who occupy the *Djazīreh*—the 'Island', between the Euphrates and the Tigris, besides a section of their tribe who inhabit Najd, the tableland in Central Arabia. We were, of course, curious to see Fahad, of whom we had heard many accounts. We found him sitting in the shade of his *mudhīf* or reception tent. This is a tent, or rather a roof of a tent, made of black goats' hair, supported by a horizontal pole which can be lengthened according to the number of guests. When Arab poets wish to extol the hospitality of a chief, they talk of him as '*tawīl ul qanāt*', having a long pole. Fahad Bey's *mudhīf* was more than thirty yards long, while its breadth was only five

yards. Under it crouched two long rows of sons of the desert, amongst whom sat Fahad Bey entertaining them and at the same time administering justice. As soon as my cavasses announced my arrival, he rose to meet us and led us to a small white Turkish tent on the shady side of which rugs were forthwith spread for us to sit with him. He also ordered some camel saddles studded with silver nails to be placed at our sides, so that we might lean our arms on them, and repeated the word *madd*, *madd*!—lengthen, lengthen—meaning that we were to stretch our legs instead of drawing them under us in the fashion of townspeople, 'for', added he, 'the only law of the desert is liberty'. After drinking the usual drop of bitter coffee out of a diminutive cup, I offered him a cigar, which he seemed to appreciate on account of its size and its durability. After smoking half of it he handed the remaining bit to his followers, of whom each one drew a few puffs of smoke until the rest was subjected to dissection by a curious Bedouin. It struck me that Fahad had not only accepted the Turkish title of Bey, but that he took great trouble to speak Turkish to his personal attendant. He evidently liked to speak the language of the ruling nation under whose yoke he did not seem to suffer too heavily. In his conversation with us he only spoke Arabic. He showed much judgment and asked very pertinent questions. After having ascertained the average yearly cost of the German Consulate at Baghdad, he came to the conclusion that he could not see the corresponding advantages. I was unable to refute his arguments.

After having been made to taste some meat roasted for us on spits, the idea being that we must not leave him without having eaten his salt, we strolled through the camp and admired his camels. These were of two distinct races—*dalūl*, or running camels, and *ibil*, or camels for loads. These two breeds are to the eye of a desert Arab about as different as a carp and a cat for us, but we did

not manage to distinguish them with certainty. The best of Fahad's dalūls were absent on a *ghazu*, or raid, which his son Mut'ib was conducting against the Shammar. On those occasions two men bestride one camel, the face of the second rider being turned backwards. We afterwards heard that this expedition proved a great failure, Mut'ib being completely routed by the Shammar and returning with few of his men and beasts.

Our arrival at Kerbelā a few hours after our visit to the Aneze was like a change of scenery in a theatre. Suddenly we found ourselves in the midst of a city in which the Persian element, mostly pilgrims, predominated. Our servants had hired a small, clean-looking empty house for us and prepared our dinner. We were pleased to meet a young official from Baghdad, Shākir Efendi, whom we knew well and whom we asked to share our evening meal with us. After dinner Shākir Efendi took us over the whole town, by the unexpected splendour of which we were dazzled. Whereas Baghdad, like most Oriental towns, was like a cemetery after sunset, Kerbelā was full of life and animation. The main streets and the bazaars were lit up and most of the shops were open. Masses of pilgrims, most of them Turkish-speaking Persians from Azarbaidjān and from Khorāssān, were thronging the streets and filling the coffee-houses. We enjoyed the picturesque aspect of true Oriental life. Thanks probably to Shākir Efendi's presence, we were in no way molested, but we were not allowed to enter the two great sanctuaries, the mausoleums of Hussein and of his cousin Abbās. The latter is a large mosque built of turquoise-coloured tiles, the former is in a similar style but still more beautiful and surmounted by a dome of thickly gilt copper. When we looked at it on the following morning from the roof of an adjacent building, we had to use blackened glass to protect our eyes against the glare of the golden dome.

The pilgrims who flock to the 'Exalted Thresholds'

of Mesopotamia mostly bring with them the remains of their dead to bury them in the plain of Kerbelā hallowed by the blood of martyrs. These corpses, wrapped in felt, are seen dangling in groups of four or five from the backs of camels. Notwithstanding this ghastly custom the pilgrimage to Kerbelā combines the amenities of a recreation with the demands of piety. There being no hotels, most of the male pilgrims take a house for the season, furnish it with their rugs and mattresses, and contract a time marriage with one of the many women kept in readiness for this purpose by the priest who keeps house for him during his stay in the Holy City. These marriages for a period varying from one day to 99 years are concluded and ritually sanctioned by the *mullahs*, or priests, for whom these transactions are a welcome source of emolument. A hint that a similar arrangement might be arrived at for our benefit was answered by us with a polite refusal.

PART VI

BACK ONCE MORE TO PERSIA

PREPARATIONS—FAREWELL TO ARABIA AND TO BEDOUIN LIFE—THE ROYAL ROAD—SCENERY AND HISTORIC REMAINS—ROMANCE OF BRIGANDAGE—TEHERAN

COUNTLESS motor-cars convey an ever-increasing number of travellers along the road from Babylonia to Media, over which the armies of many a conqueror have marched from the days of the dawn of history up to modern times. Before the introduction of the motor and the aeroplane, travellers going from stage to stage required about thirty days to ride from Baghdad to Teheran. The motor covers this distance in as many hours, and the flying-machine in but a part of one day. It is to be hoped that a few of these travellers may have found leisure to complete their school memories about the great Kings like Darius I, Alexander the Great, the Caliph Omar, Hulagu the Mongol, Timur the Tartar, Abbas the Great, and Nādir Shah of Persia, whose armies trod that great highway of Western Asia, and that they will take the time to pay a short visit to the imposing rock sculptures which Persian monarchs of the Achaemenian and of the Sassanian Dynasties have left to tell posterity of their grandeur and of their deeds.[1]

I will not give a detailed account of my thirty-one days' ride through the hot and dreary plains of Meso-

[1] Those who seek information would do well to read the historic parts of E. G. Browne's *Literary History of Persia* and *History of Persian Literature*.

potamia, of the ascent of the Persian highlands across the narrow but beautiful zone of forest, nor of the charms of garden land watered by the spring of Tāq-i Būstān, near Kirmānshāh, or the rock mountain of Bīsutūn with its celebrated sculptures and cuneiform inscriptions. They are described in many books of travel, old and new, and are, moreover, easily accessible to all who can afford the time and the cost of a motor journey from Syria to the heart of the Persian Empire.

I will limit myself to a few words about the more romantic side of those now no longer distant regions and about the people as they were before the motor had begun to exercise its all-levelling influence, effacing the distinctions and peculiarities which made them interesting.

At all times and in all countries a certain element of romance has been connected with highway robbery. This is, of course, doomed to disappear as civilization improves the means of communication, and no one can regret, nor can any civilized Government tolerate, the former state when the pilgrim or the merchant were held in constant fear of losing their lives and their property at the hands of ruthless raiders.

At the time of my journey from Baghdad to Persia the insecurity of the roads was not worse than usual. But as soon as one left the gates of the larger towns, rumours of highway robbery were the subject of every conversation. As long as the brigands were Arabs, there used to be few casualties, for they were content to strip the traveller of his belongings and let him go. But when the raiders were Kurds, there would generally be bloodshed, especially when resistance was attempted by the leaders of a caravan or when difference of creed appeared to justify manslaughter. As a matter of course, all incidents were grossly exaggerated by rumour, and many stories were told about events which had never taken place.

MOUNTAIN OF BĪSUTŪN, WHICH BEARS THE CUNEIFORM INSCRIPTION OF DARIUS I

The effect of such true or unfounded rumours was a general panic amongst the many pilgrims who began to pour into Mesopotamia at the end of the hot weather. Already during my nightly marches from Kerbelā to Baghdad I was struck by the dismay of the Persians when they noticed our small group of riders in the dark. But I always calmed their fears by giving them the salutation usual amongst Persian pilgrims: 'Iltimās-i do'ā'—which means 'I beg you for your intercession (when you pray at the holy shrine),'—upon which the answer would be given in chorus: 'Muhtāj-i do 'ā'—'We ourselves are in need of your prayers.' On my further march to Central Persia I was always accompanied by and constantly met groups of these pilgrims. Some of them remembered seeing me at Kerbelā and looked upon my presence there as an act of piety. They gave me the honorary title of Kerbelāī, and treated me with the unreserved confidence characteristic of all Turkish-speaking Muhammedans, for most of the pilgrims in this season were Turks from Azerbaidjān and Khorāssān. Their sympathy for me was much increased by my walking the greater part of the mostly easy stages, while allowing old and tired-looking men to bestride my mount.

At Shahrābān, the second stage on the road to Persia, I was invited by the head of the Turkish *gendarmerie* to join an expedition against a section of the Hamāvand Kurds. The leader of this expedition, himself a former highwayman, but now *yuzbāshī*, or captain, had called on me on the previous night and had told me all the details of the affair. The raid across the Hamrīn hills was a very picturesque show, but had more of the character of a picnic than of a serious expedition. No trace of the Kurds was discovered.

At Khanekīn, the last Turkish town, a picturesque little place at the foot of the first range of the Persian highlands, I met the Persian Consul in a coffee-house

surrounded by most of the dignitaries of the town. When asked about the safety of the road, each one of the Turkish officials answered: 'Alhamdulillah, praise be to God, the road is absolutely safe.' But the Persian's version was: 'Alhamdulillah, the road is equally unsafe on both sides of the frontier.' Then he told me—and the Turks could not deny it—that quite lately a party of Persian pilgrims had been attacked on Turkish territory, sustaining a loss of forty-two men killed, whilst two nights ago a large Persian caravan of seventy mules had been attacked and all the mules led away by Kurds just beyond the frontier. These Kurds, then, were evidently the men whom the expedition I had joined in had been sent to look for. It is a curious fact that the state of insecurity was greater in Turkey, where a properly organized and well-armed and mounted police force was maintained at a considerable cost, than in Persia, where almost nothing was done to guard the roads of communication. This is perhaps explained by the great leniency of the Sultan and his predilection for predatory nomad tribes. Whenever the military authorities of Baghdad contrived to capture the leaders of such a tribe, these had only to telegraph to Constantinople that they had been praying night and day for the Sultan's well-being to receive forgiveness and often new fiefs.

Apart from this, the reason why the Turkish mounted police did not work effectively lay in the very low pay which the men received, often after great delay. They found themselves obliged to earn what they deemed an honest penny by making private arrangements with the highwaymen for not finding them. This assured them a fairly satisfactory income, besides the advantage of greater personal security than the fulfilment of constabulary duties could have done. Wherever there was real danger or the idea of it, the Turkish gendarmes would disappear, as they did when they were to escort me to the Dog's Grave. The escorts which followed

every one of my steps whenever I left Baghdad were quite useless and a great nuisance, besides costing me a good deal in tips. Sometimes I managed to square them by giving them the choice of receiving half the customary remuneration if they remained where they were, or nothing if they insisted on escorting me. I much preferred travelling by myself and being able to mix freely with the people of the country amongst whom I had nothing to apprehend.

On my way up to Persia the Turkish escort of six horsemen left me at the little frontier fort of *Kal'āi Sabzī*. There I was awaited by thirteen Kurdish horsemen, who at first sight seemed to be inferior to the Turkish gendarmes as regards their mounts and their armament. There was no attempt at uniform. Each man wore his ordinary dark clothes made of rough woollen cloth or of felt. These escorts of Persian Kurds were relieved at short intervals, an arrangement which made that day's journey rather expensive. The khāns, or leaders of these horsemen, would not have accepted money from me. They probably took it from their subordinates after I was out of sight. They were the feudal lords over the district across which they escorted me and for the safety of which they were held responsible. One of them was a remarkably good-looking youth of sixteen with long flowing locks and exquisite manners. Like all Kurds, he wore a breech-loading rifle slung round his shoulder and a great number of cartridges in the pouches of his coat and saddle cloth. He willingly gave me the information I asked for while riding side by side with him. From him I also learnt more details about the attack on the caravan of seventy mules I have mentioned before, and he showed me the spot where this attack had taken place. This raid was the epilogue of a tragedy that had occurred eleven years before. At that time the head of a Kurdish predatory tribe named Javānmīr, had made the whole road between the

Turkish frontier and Kasr Shīrīn in Persia so dangerous for travellers that neither pilgrims nor merchants dared to pass over it. In vain had the Persian authorities, who were much concerned on account of the Shiah pilgrims in keeping the road open, sent military expeditions against that much-feared brigand chief. When, after vain attempts during a period of several years, they had not succeeded in reducing Javānmīr's small force, they applied to the Turkish Government for co-operation. This was willingly granted, as the misdeeds of Javānmīr's followers had not been limited to the Persian side of the border, and Muhammad Pasha Daghistāni, a celebrated Circassian cavalry general, was sent out against the borderland raiders. I knew this old warrior when he was living in retirement at Baghdad, where he amused himself and—perhaps in a lesser degree—his guests by playing with a nearly full-grown young lion in his reception room. Muhammad Pasha had succeeded in encircling the Kurds so closely that they saw themselves reduced to surrender either to the Turks or to the Persians. The Turkish Commander sent word to Javānmīr that if he would give himself up his life and the lives of his followers should be guaranteed. This promise would probably have been kept on account of Sultan Abdul Hamid's well-known clemency towards rebels. But the commander of the Persian contingent was in a position to make much greater promises in the event of Javānmīr's coming to his tent to talk the matter over. All possible assurances with regard to Javānmīr's personal safety were given, including the sending of a precious Korān which had been kissed and then sealed by the Persian Commander. It is difficult to understand how a man of Javānmīr's astuteness and circumspection could have been deceived by these oaths and decoyed into the Persian General's tent unattended by his followers. He was at first received with full honours and invited to take tea with the General. But during the conversa-

tion the string of the rosary which the Persian General was turning between his fingers broke, and the beads, consisting of pearls and of precious stones, rolled over the carpet of the tent. As soon as Javānmīr bent down to help the General to pick up the beads, he was overwhelmed by the General's attendants, his hands and feet were fettered and his head was cut off in front of the door of the tent. His men, who were being entertained in another part of the Persian camp, met with a similar fate, while Javānmīr's female relations were delivered over to the brutal lust of the Persian soldiery.

My readers will remember that on my visits to Isfahan in 1887 I had seen twenty-two heads suspended over the gate leading from the great square into the inner town. The bodies of these men were buried in the cemetery of Kasr Shīrīn, where high stone obelisks resembling cypress trees denoted their resting-place. I counted about thirty of these obelisks. They are used only for the graves of 'martyrs', i.e. of people who have met with a violent death.

Only one infant son of Javānmīr had, as by a miracle, escaped the massacre of 1887. This boy, Muhammad Khan, is now fifteen years old. According to the Kurdish unwritten code of honour, on reaching the age of puberty he was bound to avenge his father's death. Had he not seriously attempted to do so, he would have been exposed to the contempt of all Kurds and he would not have been considered to be his father's son.

Under these circumstances nothing remained for Muhammad Khan but to declare war on Persia. He opened hostilities by organizing a raid into Persian territory and falling on the caravan of seventy mules. An ordinary highwayman would have taken the goods and the money he could find or extort, but he would not have touched the mules, hoping that the caravan might return some day. The appropriation of these showed the affair to be an act of war, not of robbery. The

young Kurd who told me this was his namesake, Muhammad Khan's intimate friend, and had assisted him in keeping a look-out upon the road over which patrols might have approached, so that the operation could be carried out without disturbance.

At Kasr Shīrīn I visited the Governor, an intelligent old gentleman who was sensible enough not to insist on troubling me with further escorts on Persian territory, where all precautions against supposed dangers seemed ridiculous. In a country where one knows the language and the customs of the people, travelling, even if slow, is never dull. I spent many nights in private houses which my excellent Persian cook knew to be clean and fit to put up travellers. In the two big towns, Kirmānshāh and Hamadan, I made a stay of two or three days to see the curious remains of Persian antiquity. At Hamadan I met a learned Jew, Sulaiman Agha, whom I had known at Teheran. He proved an excellent guide and took me to the tombs of Esther and Mordecai, which are shown in a subterranean vault in the middle of the city. The stone sarcophagi look very old and are adorned with very fine and well-preserved wood carving. The dates of these curious monuments I was unable to make out. General Schindler gave me the following information: Date of Mordecai's sarcophagus *anno mundi* 4318 (A.D. 557), repaired A.M. 4474 (A.D. 713). Date on Esther's sarcophagus A.M. 4602, (A.D. 841), repaired A.M. 4688 (A.D. 927). Sulaiman presented me with a very old leather scroll on which the Book of Esther was written in square Hebrew letters. This had been found in the vault. It is, I think, about the most valuable manuscript in my collection.

When I crossed the last range of hills that hid the mountains of Northern Persia, cold rain had set in and the tops of even the lesser hills were covered with snow. I reached Teheran on the 14th of November after a pleasant and interesting ride of twenty-eight days. My

THE SŪZMĀNĪ, A TRIBE OF DANCERS AND MUSICIANS

KURDISH WOMEN WEAVING A RUG

two Arab horses showed no sign of fatigue and were much admired at Teheran, where they were allowed a good rest in the stables of the German Legation. I myself had not much time to remain among my friends because a telegram I found at the Legation announced the approaching arrival of my family, and I started at once on a trip to the Caspian to fetch them. As I was riding across the woods of Gīlān, I was shaken by fever and had some difficulty in reaching Rasht. There I was allowed to put up in the empty house of the British Consul, Mr. Churchill, who had just left Persia. I passed a solitary fortnight lying on a mattress placed on the floor of one of the empty rooms with high fever and very little attendance. When my wife arrived I soon recovered under her care, and a few days' march in fine winter weather soon made me feel quite fit again. For the first time we did the whole journey from Rasht to Teheran by carriage, the road built under the auspices of the Persian Government being nearly completed. We arrived at our house situated in the garden of the Legation on the 15th of December. My overland journey had thus lasted two months. My wife had taken five weeks to go from Paris via Marseilles, the Black Sea and the Caspian to Teheran.

PART VII

JERUSALEM AGAIN: 1899–1900

CHAPTER I

Appointment to Jerusalem—A Later Conversation with the Emperor about this Matter—Farewell to Persia

IT was the middle of January 1899 when at last we had arranged our house in Teheran sufficiently to be able to have a few friends to dinner in it. M. L. of the Russian Legation had brought his violin, while his friend and colleague Nelidoff, son of the well-known Russian diplomatist, was going to recite poetry, accompanied on the piano by my wife. We had not yet gone into the dining-room when my chief, Count Rex, appeared with a deciphered telegram in his hand, by which I was summoned to Berlin. There were no particulars which would have given a clue to this unexpected order, and we spent some time guessing at the different possibilities. A few days later another telegram requested me to report myself in Berlin 'without delay'. This telegram did not show any more than the previous one whether I was to leave Teheran for good or whether I was called to the Foreign Office for some personal instruction, and would then return to my post. In the latter case, I should have left my family at Teheran without making any changes in my household arrangements. But if I was to be called permanently to the Foreign Office or transferred to some other post, it would be necessary to sell

a great part of our furniture, besides our horses, carriages, piano, etc., as well as to dismiss our servants and engage some new ones for the journey to Europe, as well as settling many other details. This would take quite six weeks, unless I was prepared to abandon my belongings to Persian *dallāls*, or brokers, who would not have missed such an opportunity of swindling.

In this dilemma, I was relieved by a letter from Baron Holstein, who told me that the Emperor, after his visit to Jerusalem, wished to send a new Consul there, and that the Foreign Office had proposed me for the post. The Emperor, who, according to the Constitution, had to appoint Consuls, had agreed to my nomination.

I was much pleased at this change in my life. In connection with the Emperor's visit, Jerusalem had become a post of some interest and importance. Besides this, it was a satisfaction for me to succeed my father in a post where he had spent a good part of his career and where he was not forgotten. During my thirty days' march from Baghdad to Teheran I had been collecting scraps of information about the Emperor's visit to Palestine, which I gleaned from occasional newspaper articles or from what the Turkish local Governors told me. I had felt some surprise that I had not been employed in any way on that occasion. Afterwards, Baron Holstein told me that it had been intended to attach me to their Majesties to show and explain to them the sites which I knew so well. I had, however, been too far away for them to be able to move me to Berlin or Constantinople in time. A very learned professor had been chosen in my stead as cicerone for the Imperial couple, but his explanations had appealed so little to the minds of the august visitors that it had been a relief to them when a German clergyman, Pastor Ludwig Schneller, a man who had been born and brought up in the Holy City, stepped in and gave them an unsophisticated explanation of everything that could interest

them without any learned comment. Curiously enough it was *I* who profited by the agreeable impression my friend the pastor had made on the Emperor and Empress. They both subsequently believed that I had been the man who had been their guide, and they expressed their satisfaction about it. One day—I think it must have been in 1910—when my wife and I were lunching with the Emperor at the *Neues Palais* at Potsdam, the Emperor said to my wife, who was seated next to him: 'Your husband has a wonderful knowledge of the East. I shall never forget how well he explained everything to us when we visited Jerusalem.' When my wife modestly disclaimed my right to this compliment, the Emperor appealed to the Empress, next to whom I was seated, on the opposite side of the table, and she answered: 'Doch, Herr Rosen hat uns geführt und uns alles erklärt, ich weiss es ganz genau.' (Yes, Herr R. was our guide and explained everything to us. I know it for certain.) 'Well, what do you say now?' asked the Emperor. 'Do you still deny it after what you have heard?' This was rather embarrassing for me, but happily I remembered a passage of Saadi which could be applied to the situation. I said: 'A Persian poet says that one must never contradict a monarch. If the King were to say in the middle of the day, "I think the sun is setting," let your answer be: "Behold the moon and the Pleiades." ' The Emperor laughed, but was not, I think, quite convinced. He seemed to attribute my denial to an excess of modesty. He was not the only one to hold that opinion. Most of the newspapers, when giving a sketch of my career, spread the legend that the Emperor had taken a liking to me during his stay at Jerusalem, and that this was the explanation of my advancement during the following years.

But I must now return to the spring of 1899. It was the middle of March when we at last said farewell to Persia, and started on our journey to Europe. As

our carriage was entering one of the stations of the road to Kazvin, another carriage was just leaving it in the direction of Teheran. Its driver, however, stopped short and made signs to us. Inside were Mr. (afterwards Sir Charles and, later, Lord) Hardinge and his very good-looking young wife, who were coming out to Persia for the first time. He had stopped the carriage so that we should make Mrs. Hardinge's acquaintance. We regretted very much that only a very short time was allowed us for this meeting, all the more so as we were not returning to Persia. Mrs. Hardinge told us that she had been looking forward to playing with my wife. We heard afterwards that her arrival at Teheran created quite a sensation. She conquered the Persian capital from the youngest attaché to the Grand Vizier and to the Shah, who, if I am rightly informed, gave musical parties at the Palace in her honour. A Persian friend of mine, writing about her triumphs, quoted a quatrain of Omar Khayyám's which runs thus:

'You to whose cheek the wild rose pays tribute,
To whose face Chinese idols must pay tribute,
Whose glances have forced the King of Babylon
To give you as tribute horses and towers and elephants, standards and his queen.'[1]

It was not until the beginning of April (1899) that we reached Berlin, after a journey of more than three weeks. There was no hotel yet in Rasht, near the Caspian Sea, but we were allowed to put up in the house of an Armenian who gave us his state room furnished with silk-covered divans and cushions. As we were

[1] The first part of this verse has not been correctly translated by European Orientalists, e.g. by E. Heron Allen in his otherwise excellent facsimile edition, pp. 163 to 165. The terms of the quatrain are taken from the game of chess, which, as everybody knows, is of Persian origin. The figure we call the queen is called *farzīn* in Persian, which means grand vizier and at the same time commander-in-chief. When the game was first introduced into Italy the word farzīn was rendered by *virgine*. In course of time the maiden became the King's wife and thus the queen.

soaked by the rain, we lit a brazier to dry our clothes. But our landlord implored us to renounce this comfort, because the warmth of the room would hatch his silk-worms' eggs and bring out the young before there were mulberry leaves enough to feed them.

The steamer on the Caspian had this time landed us at Petrowsk, north of Baku, whence we had a week's railway journey to Berlin.

CHAPTER II

German Policy in the Holy Land—First Meeting with the Emperor

IN the Foreign Office I was at once initiated by Baron Holstein in the special work connected with my new post. This was mostly caused by the fact that the German Emperor had for the first time extended his personal interest to the Roman Catholics of Germany as well as to the Protestants. One consequence of this was that some sacred spot was desired for German Catholics. For this purpose the Emperor had obtained from the Sultan in Constantinople the gift of a small area on Mount Zion on which, according to tradition, had stood the house in which the Virgin Mary had lived and died. This place was called *dormitio Sanctae Virginis*. *Dormitio* is the Latin translation of κοίμησις, which is the Greek rendering of a corresponding Hebrew or Aramaic word, which denotes the place where some one has lain down to die. The Emperor wished to show his impartiality by promoting the interests of his Catholic subjects in a similar way as had hitherto been done for Protestant religious establishments. There were also questions connected with the protection of Christians in general which had arisen when the Emperor was in Jerusalem.

One day when I was returning home I met at the door a footman in livery who told me the Emperor wished to see me at lunch on the following day, the 9th of April. He also handed me a big card on which all details, time, dress, etc., were to be found. I accordingly went to

the Schloss, the Imperial Palace, at the stated hour, curious to meet the Person on whom the interest of all Germany or, one might almost say, of all Europe was concentrated. Although I was very punctual, the Emperor was already among the people assembled in the reception room. I was not aware of this, and was somewhat taken by surprise when an officer in a red hussar's uniform turned to me and expressed his pleasure at seeing the new Consul for Jerusalem. My first impression was that of a particularly kind and amiable gentleman whose lively way of talking and whose keen interest in the subject of conversation were striking.

I must here apologize to some, maybe to many, of my English-speaking readers for not abusing the Kaiser. But it is impossible for me to do so. Apart from the indecency of publicly attacking one's Sovereign, I am restrained by a very strong feeling of personal sympathy which I felt from the first moment of my acquaintance with William II, and still feel. Neither the tragic reverses he suffered after Germany's defeat nor the thousandfold accusations hurled against him as the supposed instigator of the War, will ever change this view, which is corroborated by a careful study of the political documents hitherto published. The picture which the public has of him I know to be quite wrong; but, as a Persian poet has it, 'The paint-brush is in the hands of his enemies.'

He talked about all the different questions concerning Jerusalem and expressed his wish to see me again before I left. A few days later I was asked to a small dinner at Potsdam, where he again showed his strong interest in the Holy Land and gave me very minute instructions and many interesting hints. He wished me not only to look after the German Catholic priests in Palestine, but also at the same time to keep in close touch with the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Monsignore Piavi, and to maintain, together with my Italian colleague, the

principle that each nation was to exercise protection over its own subjects and religious establishments, without recognizing the right claimed by any one nation to play the part of protector over the whole of Christendom. France's pretensions in this matter were very old and had been recognized by the Vatican, but were no more up to date now that every nation was in a position to look after her own subjects in the Levant. The Emperor told me he had explained his views on this matter to the French Consul-General in Jerusalem, but he was not sure whether his expositions had had very much effect, for after listening patiently for some time M. Auzépy had answered: 'Sire, vous qui êtes un si puissant Empereur, je vous supplie dites un mot à mon gouvernement pour qu'on me transfère à un autre poste, car on meurt d'ennui à Jérusalem.'

CHAPTER III

Arrival in Jerusalem — Great Changes — My Colleague

July, 1899.

WHEN I arrived in the Holy City I was welcomed at the railway station by the German Colony. I was pleased to see almost all those of my countrymen whom I had known there in my boyhood. Age seemed to weigh lightly on all these people who had come to Jerusalem for some religious motive, and who led a quiet though not inactive life there. Not a few of them were craftsmen who had taught the home methods of their trades to intelligent Arabs and Jews, enabling them to better their material existence and at the same time improving their minds by the knowledge of modern Europe. They were all highly respectable people, and some of them had contributed to the scientific knowledge of Biblical antiquity, especially an architect of the name of Schick, who was the first man to investigate in detail the structure of the remains of the Temple.

The number of Germans had been greatly increased by the settlement of the 'Templars', a chiliastic sect from Württemberg which had, as mentioned in Part I, come to the Holy Land to await the second coming of the Lord. The delay in the fulfilment of their expectations had not shaken their faith, but they did not mean to spend their time in idleness, and had settled in so-called colonies, which, however, were too small to deserve the name of villages. One of these colonies they had built on the plain of Rephaim, south-west of Jerusalem,

near the road to Bethlehem. Others had followed their example, and gradually the greater part of the plain was covered with modern buildings.

But this was but a slight alteration of the original character of Jerusalem when compared with the changes brought about by other communities. I have told my readers that the first to settle outside the town walls had been the Russians, who had erected a number of large establishments, such as hospitals, hospices, etc., for their numerous pilgrims. They had afterwards built a high tower on the top of the Mount of Olives. This had so changed the landscape that I had some difficulty in finding that hill again which now seemed to be no more than a slight elevation of the soil. All nations and all religious communities vied with one another in erecting churches, convents, schools, hospitals, homes, etc., on all sides of the town, especially on the northern and north-western sides, which are not separated from the old city by deep-cut valleys as the other sides are. All that country which I knew so well had been built over and so changed that I could only trace the old features with the greatest difficulty. Religious zeal had been stimulated by speculation in land which fetched good prices. All the Consulates and most of the other public buildings had been moved from the inner city to the new north-western suburb. The German Consulate was a comparatively new building to the right of the road leading to Jaffa. The German orphanage and hospital were now in the same neighbourhood.

But the greatest changes of all were caused by the increase and extension of the Jewish community. The Jews were no more restricted to the slums of the ghetto as in the old days, but had spread all over the inner town, invading even the old Muhammedan quarters, down to the precincts of the Great Mosque. They had built over every part of the surroundings of the city,

WALLS OF JERUSALEM WITH THE ROAD LEADING TO BETHLEHEM, IN 1862

From a Sketch by the Author's Mother

covering almost every historic site with rows of little uniform houses or with huts made of every imaginable material, not excluding packing-cases and oil tins. As a matter of course housing had to be provided for the great increase of population that had taken place during the last thirty years, but this was done without any plan or regular system, because the Turkish Government only tolerated the immigration of Jews and proved unwilling to provide for the accommodation of a people who in the future might be dangerous to their sway. During my first stay in Jerusalem the population of the town was estimated at about 20,000. Now there were more than 60,000 inhabitants, of whom at least 40,000 were Jews. All these had to be housed, and this caused a considerable building activity. Necessity superseded historical interest, as well as the principles of hygiene. The greater part of the new town made a squalid impression.

My French colleague, M. Auzépy, with whom I had made friends, became at once my guide in this new Jerusalem. He showed me all the new buildings and told me by whom they were inhabited. The house beneath which the 'chamber of silver and gold of King Balak' was still hidden was now the French Consulate-General. Many were the new French religious institutions, of which M. Auzépy was now a sort of patron saint. They showed their allegiance to him by providing him with butter, cheese, salad and fresh vegetables, which they produced with much success for their own use.

When I once admired some of these good things at lunch in his house and told him that I could not obtain such delicacies, he answered: 'Mais n'avez-vous pas d'institutions religieuses?'

In this, I must confess, Germans were rather behindhand as compared with other communities. One day walking with Auzépy, I noticed a big new building

and asked who were the inmates. 'Ce sont les Américains,' he said. 'Ils attendent le Messie et en attendant ils font d'excellentes confitures que, du reste, je vous recommande.'

My French colleague's main function lay in assisting at the many religious ceremonies held in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and in many other sanctuaries where he occupied a place of honour which was reserved only for the representative of France, *fille ainée de l'église*. On these occasions the golden *Ciborium* was handed to him to kiss. This he did in the name of an atheistic government with dignity though without enthusiasm. Everything connected with what he called 'notre sainte église' was an intolerable bore to an Epicurean accustomed to the atmosphere of gay and literary Paris. It was said that he was the hero of Daudet's *Sapho*. Anyhow the characters of that novel were more his style than the ecclesiastics of Jerusalem. All their pretensions and their many quarrels seemed to him to be utter nonsense; and so they were. Yet within the lifetime of some of us disputes concerning the protection of Christians in the Levant had been deemed sufficiently important to contribute to the outbreak of the Crimean War!

I liked my French colleague very much. Though he felt melancholy and lonely—his very delicate wife and children could not endure the climate and were almost always absent—he was always good company and often witty. He was the only man who would walk with me and not talk about petty local affairs. Unfortunately he did not like riding—'J'ai horreur du cheval'—and was debarred from visiting many an interesting spot where carriages did not go. I suggested tennis to him, which he said he played too badly to join those who played that game regularly. I said he would improve with practice, but he resignedly answered: 'Non, mon

cher, pour bien jouer au tennis il faut être blond, anglais et protestant,' and he was none of these.

My other colleagues were not less friendly than M. Auzépy, but there is nothing special to say about them. We had met Mr. Dickson, the British Consul, and his family at Beyrout, and knew their relations there and were on very friendly terms with them. The Governor of Jerusalem, who not long ago had received the Emperor, was a well-meaning and clever Turk from Constantinople. He had the rare peculiarity of not accepting bribes. I do not think he would have 'eaten' part of the money the Sultan had sent to Jerusalem to clean up the town for the Kaiser's visit. But on that occasion the strictest orders had been issued from Constantinople that not a farthing was to be diverted from its official destination. This order had been the despair of the Jerusalem authorities, for, after everything had been done that was necessary, a big sum was still left. The Governor had repeatedly begged the German Consul, my predecessor, to express his wishes with regard to the embellishment of the town. The Consul drew his attention to some heaps of rubbish in front of the Damascus Gate. But to clear these away would not exhaust the Sultan's gold. It was therefore resolved to build some ugly shops right in front of the gate, which quite spoilt the view of that picturesque building that dated from the time of the Crusaders. (See Plate, p. 24.)

I had put up at a German hotel near the Jaffa Gate, as my predecessor was still busy packing his furniture. On the morning after my arrival I tried to hasten to the Consulate, but was delayed by visitors, some of whom had known me in my earlier days. I had given strict orders not to receive any further callers, when I was told a certain Ismail Bey was not to be prevailed upon to postpone his visit. I asked the landlord's daughter to tell him it was impossible for me to see him then. Would he not come at some other time? I was startled

to hear that he said he was my brother. 'How is that possible? I won't listen to such nonsense.' But the young lady assured me that Ismail Bey was perhaps the most respected citizen of Jerusalem, and that by brother he might possibly mean milk brother, which in the East is looked upon as a true relationship. 'Your mother', continued Fräulein F., 'was on friendly terms with Ismail Bey's mother, Sitt Salma, the wife of Musa Efendi, afterwards Musa Pasha.' This, then, was one of the charming Arab ladies whom I had so often visited with my mother in their harem when I was a boy. She was supposed to have given me the breast when I was a baby. I at once had Ismail Bey ushered into my room. He embraced me and gave me many kind messages from his mother, who he said would be pleased to receive my visit. Ismail Bey was many years younger than I. An elder brother of his, Aarif, was about my age.

A few days later I went up the well-remembered steep stone staircase that led into Musa Pasha's harem, just opposite our old house in the narrow street Akbat at Takieh. I was shown into a small compartment furnished in would-be European style. It was the style that had prevailed in Germany in the middle of the nineteenth century. The few pictures in the room were oleographs. Soon a stout old lady appeared dressed in European clothes that were too tight for her. Her greyish hair was hanging on her back in a short plait. Over her head she had drawn a shawl of European origin, with which she carefully hid a part of her face in accordance with the precept of Islam. There was little left in Sitt Salma's appearance and surroundings to remind me of the exquisite grace and beauty of her younger days, nor of the truly Oriental style of her harem many years ago, if it had not been for the sweet and melodious voice which welcomed me. 'Ya ibni' (my son), she began, 'when Musa's end was approaching I asked him: "When Sulaiman" (this was

the Arabic equivalent of Friedrich, my Christian name, both meaning the bringer of peace) "returns to Jerusalem, am I then to receive him, or must I not see him?" He answered: "Of course you may see him. Is he not your son?" ' She then talked much of old times and of my mother's kindness to her. True facts and legends were the elements of her sweet and charming conversation, saddened by the remembrance of so many who were no more among the living.

Ismail Bey proved a true friend to me and did much to render my stay in the Holy Land agreeable and profitable to me, as I shall relate later on. But, like all Orientals he tried to interest me in local affairs which lay outside the scope of my competence. One day he came to have a long talk with me on a subject of great importance. He wished to complain of the Governor, and wanted me to exercise my own or my country's influence in getting him removed from his post. He was going to give me a detailed list of all the Governor's failings, when I interrupted him by asking him to tell me at once the worst of the Pasha's crimes. 'The worst of all his crimes, you wish to know? Oh, my brother, you will hardly believe me when I tell you that he is quite incorruptible.'—'But do you call that a crime?' I asked. 'Is it not a rare virtue, and is not corruption a shameful blemish of Turkish administration?'—'How innocent you Franks all are, even you, my brother, who have known the East since your early childhood! How do you imagine affairs can be made to go on without bribery? Do you think that a single document reaches its destination, say to the Court of Appeal or some other high place in Constantinople, unless the wheels of the machinery of law and administration are constantly being greased? Everything is at a deadlock, my dear; no petition, no lawsuit receives attention while the present system prevails. And the worst is that none of the lower officials ever accept their

traditional fee when they see the chief refusing any sort of private emolument. It is from the head that the fish stinks, as the Turks say. It is the Pasha who is responsible for the complete paralysis of all our public affairs.'

It was with some difficulty that I made Ismail Bey understand that it was impossible for me to interfere in the administration of the country. At the same time I found that the Governor did all he could to keep the many different and often conflicting religious communities in order, especially the Christians. I remember seeing him in the afternoon of the 15th of August sitting outside the crypt which is believed to contain the tomb of the Holy Virgin, struggling to bring to reason the Christian communities who had come to blows in the church while celebrating the Feast of the Assumption. He tried to settle matters by politeness and persuasion, but perhaps with less success than his immediate chief, Nazim Pasha, the Governor-General of Syria, had had a few years before. On that occasion there had been a conflict between the Turkish Government and the Greek Catholics concerning the election of a new Patriarch. The policy followed by the Greeks had been one of obstruction. They refused to elect a candidate for the Patriarchal See. When summoned to put an end to this state of things, they pointed out that they could not pronounce themselves unless they were inspired by the Holy Ghost, and that this had hitherto not taken place. Nazim Pasha had upon this betaken himself to Jerusalem, where he had summoned the Greek ecclesiastics and told them that unless the Holy Ghost inspired them within twenty-four hours he would take drastic measures. This threat appeared all the more serious as Nazim Pasha was the man who was supposed to have organized the great massacre of Armenians in Constantinople in 1896. It was a very fortunate coincidence that the Holy Ghost happened to inspire the Greek clergy on that same day.

Ismail Bey and his mother were not the only people in Jerusalem who reminded me of the old days.

The Sheikh of Abu Dis appeared to greet me and invited my wife and myself to his village on the Mount of Olives. But the old traditional form of hospitality which included the baking of bread had been replaced by the Sheikh offering us a plum pudding with our coffee. This he told us he had received three years ago from an English friend as a gift of gratitude. He had not seen his way to eating the contents of the large china bowl marked Buszard, as he was suspicious of pig's fat in it and his appreciation of the kind gift had been marred also by his having to pay heavily for it in the custom house. Now, however, had come the opportunity of making a good use of it. There was nothing to be done but to consume the greater part of the half-petrified pudding in the name of old friendship.

I have mentioned in a previous chapter the servant girl from Bethlehem who had waited all those years for me to return to Jerusalem that she might serve me and my family as her father had served my parents more than thirty-two years before. She wore European clothes, but her step-sister Halwe, a very much younger fellah woman, from Beit-Jala near Bethlehem, wore the becoming costume of that place. When my family joined me in Jerusalem the young woman entered our service and was very much admired by our visitors. She would have made a good model for a picture of the Virgin. Her father owned a fine vineyard near Bethlehem. I would often ride out there to have a chat with the fellāhīn, the peasants whose life and ideas hardly differ from those of the old inhabitants of Palestine as they are described in the Bible. I made great friends with these fellāhīn, who once invited me to a picnic on the top of a high hill, whence one could see the Mediterranean on the west and the Dead Sea, backed by the hills of Moab, in the east. The white houses of Bethlehem and Beit-

Jala surrounded by vineyards and olive groves lay at our feet, forming an oasis in the desert hills of Judah. Whilst I was watching the beautiful scenery and listening to tales told in the fellah dialect, the younger men dug a hollow in the side of the hill and filled it with thorns, thistles, dry brambles and roots of vines. These they lit, and fed the fire for a long time. When all these combustibles had been burnt a whole sheep stuffed with rice and the seeds of pine-cones was placed in the excavation and the opening hermetically closed with wet earth. After an hour the primitive oven was opened and we all sat down to a meal, the exquisite delicacy of which could hardly be surpassed. This way of preparing mutton is called *zarb*.

BETHLEHEM WOMEN

From a Pencil Sketch by E. Rietschel, 1855

CHAPTER IV

Arrival of my Family—Gertrude Bell our Guest—Her Successful Studies in Arabic—Her Interest in Ancient History of Palestine—Explorations and Excursions

MY enjoyment of such expeditions as this was unfortunately restricted by frequent attacks of malaria. This I tried to cure by a change of air, spending the rest of the summer at a very comfortable hotel at Jaffa kept by a German lady of Abyssinian origin. There I awaited the arrival of my wife and family. When we had settled down in the Consulate in Jerusalem with our furniture, which had in the meantime arrived, we found the house comfortable and pretty, but there were only just enough rooms for us. This made it necessary to provide for another guest in a small neighbouring hotel. This guest was Miss Gertrude Bell, later so well known to all people interested in the Near East, whom we had invited to spend the winter with us in Jerusalem. Although she had her rooms at the hotel next door to our house, she had all her meals with us and joined us in all our undertakings.

I need hardly say that Miss Bell was a most delightful person to have with us in a place where we knew that everything was bound to be interesting to her. Full of life and the faculty of making the best of every situation, she acted as a strong stimulus on us who were equally intent upon seeing as much as we could of the unique old town and its wonderful surroundings. Showing her all the historic sites of Jerusalem and Bethlehem was a

great pleasure to us. All our spare time was used for long rides to various places, some of which I had not yet seen. She was an excellent and quite intrepid rider, never showing any nervousness when going over stony paths or occasional flat rocks that were as slippery as if they had been polished. She at once took to learning Arabic with a teacher who came to her every day, and she was soon able to speak that difficult language quite fluently. This added to the enjoyment of our expeditions at which we were often the guests of hospitable Arabs. Having spoken Arabic from childhood, I was able to give her many hints and explanations. I also gave her a pleasing and easy book to read, the tale of Aladdin, which she soon managed to read by herself.

Of our experiences near Jerusalem I will only mention the one to Nebi Musa, the great Muhammedan sanctuary between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea. According to the Moslems, Nebi Musa (the prophet Moses) was buried there, whereas the Bible tells us he died on Mount Nebo on the eastern side of the Jordan and the Dead Sea. The annual festival in memory of the great prophet took place in the spring and thus coincided with the Easter festivities of the Christians. It served as a kind of protest against the festivals of the unbelievers, and Muhammedan fanaticism would make it advisable for all non-Moslems to keep well out of the way of the masses of men who undertook the pilgrimage to Nebi Musa. Under these circumstances I was most agreeably surprised when Ismail Bey, my 'brother', turned up one morning to invite us to Nebi Musa. He was able to do this because he was a descendant of the Prophet, and the recognized leader of the whole Muhammedan community.

We all looked forward with the keenest interest to this expedition. In the *Letters of Gertrude Bell*, selected and edited by Lady Bell, D.B.E., there is only the following fragment about this expedition (vol. I, p. 82):

JERUSALEM,
April 13th, 1900.

To-morrow the Rosens and I are going off after lunch to Neby Mussa, where we are to camp for 2 nights. I think it will be immensely amusing. Oh Father dearest, don't I have a fine time! I'm only overcome by the sense of how much better it is than I deserve! . . .

We were not disappointed when after having pitched our tents outside the sanctuary, we were led into the large square stone building which contains the supposed burial-place of Moses. The crowds inside the building followed us with evident suspicion, and we might have been in some danger had it not been for Ismail Bey's presence and protection. The people assembled here had come from all parts of Southern Palestine. The majority were fellāhīn, whose charming young women, in their becoming national attire, sang and performed their graceful old dances. It was a unique and beautiful sight. Gertrude Bell managed to take a number of snapshots, in spite of the people being terrified whenever they saw the camera bracketed on them. She gave us all her photos, two of which are reproduced in this volume with Lady Bell's kind permission.

Ismail Bey invited us to the dinner given in honour of the leading men of the pilgrimage. It consisted of a whole sheep stuffed with rice and other good things roasted on a spit. The dinner was as good as the scene was interesting.

We saw a second dinner prepared for the rest of the pilgrims, several thousand men. Huge cauldrons of boiled rice with small pieces of mutton in it were guarded by energetic-looking men holding clubs or sticks. We asked why these waiters were provided with sticks and were told that they used them to beat the pilgrims' hands with if they tried to take out more than their share of meat with the rice. Of course all these pilgrims

were ignorant of the use of knives and forks. Even our host and his more distinguished guests tore off pieces of the roast sheep with their fingers.

It was of course not possible for me to join in all the excursions that Miss Bell undertook. My duties would not allow of a repeated or prolonged absence from my post. But I managed to make myself free for a trip to the country east of the Jordan, which took about a fortnight. We crossed the bridge over the Jordan not far from Jericho and rode in easy stages across a fertile and partly wooded country which contains the magnificent remains of several fine Greek towns, dating mostly from the last two centuries before our era. Among these were Amman, now capital of Transjordania, formerly called Philadelphia, and Jerash formerly Gerasa, with its avenue of temples and rows of columns and theatres.

In the days of Christ there were ten flourishing Greek townships in Palestine, the so-called Decapolis. The magnificent buildings of these more or less independent communities must have formed a striking contrast to the primitive Jewish towns and villages with their rude architecture. It is curious to note that all through the New Testament these beautiful towns are hardly mentioned. To the Jews of those days they were simply pagan and of no interest to the pious. One of the finest, certainly the most picturesque, of these towns, must have been Gadara, now Muqeis. Its remains scattered over the now wooded heights overhanging the south-eastern bank of the Lake of Tiberias, are built of black basalt instead of white marble or limestone. This place is mentioned in the New Testament as the locality where the evil spirits entered into the swine, who then rushed down the steep hill-side and were drowned in the lake.

We had pitched our tents on the edge of this precipitous descent and found it difficult to lead our horses down the narrow path to the bottom of the hill. There we found a regular watering-place, 'El Himme', estab-

PROCESSION OF MUHAMMEDAN PILGRIMS TO NEBI MUSA, THE TOMB OF MOSES, IN THE DESERT OF JUDAH

'AISHA BRINGS MY DAILY SUPPLY OF DRINKING WATER FROM THE SPRING OF 'AIN KĀRIM, FIVE MILES DISTANT FROM JERUSALEM

lished around a strong hot sulphur spring for the benefit of the Bedouins of the neighbourhood. A basin of unhewn stones had been built, and surrounded by a reed fence. At our arrival, the manager at once drove the people out of the bath and let a fresh flow of hot and cold water into the basin.

While we were enjoying the luxury of a short bathing season combined with a visit by boat to Tiberias, Gertrude Bell continued her journey northwards in the direction of Damascus. My wife and I did not like to spend a night in Tiberias, because our cavass had warned us that the Sultan of Fleas resided there. Even if this were so we discovered another residence of this Sultan on our way back over another road to the bridge across the Jordan near Jericho, and thence to Jerusalem, where Miss Bell soon joined us again.

During her stay with us she undertook several desert excursions of which her letters give some interesting particulars. The rest of the time was occupied mostly by the study of Biblical archaeology. Her interest in the Holy Places was, as Lady Bell justly remarks, that of the archaeologist and not that of the believer; but it was none the less keen for this. My own attitude was the same. We tried to see as much of the country as time would allow and besides filling up the gaps in our knowledge by reading, we attended some excellent lectures on Biblical research. Among the lecturers the French Dominican monks were the most prominent. These eminent *savants* were well acquainted with the results of modern investigation and were completing them by their studies in the Holy Land. They only sought to establish historic truth unhampered, as far as I could judge, by any restrictions of their Order. The only things to remind us of their ecclesiastical character were their white robes and an Ave Maria said at the beginning of their meetings.

I had a special reason to pursue these studies. My

father, who had spent nearly fourteen years of his life in Jerusalem, had devoted a great part of his time to the study of the ancient history of Palestine and Syria. His contributions to different scientific journals were much appreciated by his great friend and protector Alexander von Humboldt, and by other members of the Academy and of the University of Berlin. During the latter part of his life, when he retired to Detmold in Germany, these studies were resumed in a new shape and to a new purpose. It had struck him, as indeed it has struck many before and after him, that the spreading of so small a nation as that of the Jews over almost the whole *orbis terrarum* during the centuries that preceded Christianity, presented a problem difficult to explain, while at the same time the disappearance of the Phoenicians, including the inhabitants of Carthage and her colonies, was equally difficult to account for. This gradually led him to the hypothesis that the two nations so closely connected by origin and language must have merged into one, in which the Jewish element represented the religious ideas, whereas the Phoenicians proper implanted their commercial capabilities in the other half. Following up this idea led to ever new and striking discoveries all confirming its probability. In 1890 my father had with great care and trouble at last put all his notes together and nearly finished his book, when on a journey to the East his manuscript mysteriously disappeared in an hotel at Cairo. By no means discouraged by this set-back, my father on his return to Germany at once began to write the book afresh. But only a few pages had been written when death took the pen from his hand in the autumn of 1891.

I was then in Teheran, where it was very difficult for me to take up the study of a subject of which I knew little and about which there were no books of reference to be had. Fortunately, as I have already mentioned, my friend Cadogan possessed a copy of Renan's *Histoire*

du Peuple d'Israel, which he lent me and which I was able to buy after his death. This and a few other books which I got from Germany gave me enough information to allow me to conceive the idea of continuing or rather of reconstructing my father's work. I had for more than nine years been following up this plan when my appointment to Jerusalem gave me a fresh impetus and a great deal of new information. I had with me the manuscript containing all I knew on the subject, which I had written under the willow-trees by the waters of Babylon while I was Consul at Baghdad. This I now corrected and completed, discussing the problem all the while with Gertrude Bell. She showed the keenest interest in the subject, and besides was eager to see my endeavours crowned with success.

On her return to England she spoke to several prominent Orientalists about my idea. The following letter she wrote to me on the subject will I trust interest those who have known her or heard of her.

RED BARNS,
COATHAM, REDCAR.
September 11th, 1900.

MY DEAR DR. ROSEN,

I have just turned out of my shelves a book of Hafiz translations which I got a long time ago in order to send to you and which has never been sent. I think they will interest you.

Mr. Leaf is a most intelligent person and I believe a good Persian scholar. I should like you to meet him some day. Talking of Orientalists, my Arabic master, Mr. Strong, the Librarian to the House of Lords, has just been staying with us. He is, I should say, the most learned in Eastern languages, dead and alive, of any Orientalist in England. I talked to him a good deal about Jews and Phoenicians. He said that he thought, as far as he could judge, that your theory was entirely correct and that no one has as yet expounded

it, or got further than the suggestions contained in the late works of Renan. I discussed with him your difficulties, which he fully recognized, saying that he knew that anyone who was not of the 'Fach' would be treated by the learned of Germany at the point of the sword—that they were, in short, a close corporation and insisted upon all work being done upon their lines. He added, however, that he thought you would find that you had little to learn from them. You draw from the fountain head, so to speak, and your theories are based upon the study of primary authorities to which they have added nothing but commentaries. These commentaries are not, he said, of much value and consist very often of little but a tabulation of ignorance, which is not a system that tends to further advance in the path of knowledge. I was much interested in what he said and I think it will interest you, for he is a man who is singularly well acquainted with what has been done in Oriental learning in all parts of Europe. He is a very good Hebrew scholar. He has an immense respect for Renan's scholarship and I should say was well qualified to judge.

My Father and I are going to Naples on the 28th by long sea and coming home slowly through Italy. I hope it will do him a great deal of good, but all his doctors insist upon the necessity of his taking a long holiday and I expect we shall go off to India and Japan some time during the winter. That means no Syria this spring, but I am seriously contemplating coming out in the following October and journeying to Arabia in the winter. I mean to consult Luetticke on the subject.

I was delighted to hear from Nina again. I mean to send her before I go abroad a sheaf of photographs.

Much love to you all.

Ever yours,

Very sincerely,

GERTRUDE BELL.

P.S.—I don't expect an answer to this letter!

Since that letter was written, nearly thirty years have elapsed, and it is only now that the book is at last coming out. The excellent advice conveyed in it I was unfortunately unable to follow. The book would probably have been more intelligible to the general public than it is in its present shape, but it would have been open to much criticism from those who have worked the same ground without being able to make Columbus's egg stand. I had to ask the collaboration of a Professor of theology, who naturally gave the book a more erudite character, which means of course an immense improvement.

We were very sorry indeed when the time came for Miss Bell to return to Europe. Her gratitude for what we had been able to do to make her stay in Jerusalem agreeable and profitable to her, far exceeded our merits. I was glad, however, to read in one of the letters she wrote from Jerusalem to Sir Hugh Bell, her father, the following words: 'I really think that these months here will permanently add to the pleasure and interest of the rest of my days.' At the same time I cannot repress the melancholy reflection that all the knowledge and experience of the East which she owed to a great extent to the aid of Germans was afterwards employed against my country. I do not blame her for this, for her motive was love of her country, and she has tried, wherever she has been able, to help those of my countrymen, mostly Orientalists and archaeologists, at a time when the hatred of everything German was, so to speak, an article of the political creed of the great majority of the English.

My second summer was less agreeable than the first one had been. Severe illness in my family obliged me to leave town and to seek a temporary residence in a locality not infested by the poisonous *anopheles* mosquito, the spreader of malaria. I settled in the Greek monastery of Mar Elias situated on a ridge half-way between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. The strong breeze that

blows every afternoon from the sea to the Arabian Desert chases the obnoxious insects away. The kindly Greek Prior of the monastery placed at our disposal a few airy rooms that were built on the roof of the church, whose dome rose from the centre of the terrace. He said he would be glad to provide milk for us and asked how much we required daily. When I answered two pints, he declared that although he had quite a herd of goats and milk-giving sheep, such a quantity would far exceed what they could yield. That was in the land where milk and honey are supposed to flow!

The olive grove by the monastery was our recreation ground. There was nothing to be done there but to sit in the shade of the trees. Thirty-two years before I had spent a summer camping there with my parents. I was able to recognize with certainty several of the old olive trees in whose branches we children had disported ourselves,—such is the duration and slow growth of the olive tree.

From my room on the terrace of Mar Elias, I was able to overlook a great part of the ancient Kingdom of Judah from which all Jews are supposed to have come. In the north were the hills that had belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. To the south were the ridges which hid the ancient town of Hebron. To the west were hills and valleys that sloped down to the Phoenician town of Jope (Jaffa) and to the Mediterranean. The view towards the east extended to the hills of Moab on the other side of the Dead Sea, far beyond the limits of the old Jewish kingdom. From a territory not much greater than what I could take in at a glance, the Jews of the world were supposed to have come. Here I went once more over the sketch of my book on the spreading of the Jews over the *orbis terrarum*, adding what new arguments I had gleaned from the lectures I had attended during the winter season.

When I began my work, the idea was still prevalent

that the dispersion of the Jews had taken place after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, A.D. 70. This error is all the more astonishing, as in the New Testament (Acts of the Apostles, chap. II), we have a list of Jewish settlements in Asia, Europe and Africa, showing that long before that period the Jews were spread over all the important localities of the civilized world. There are many testimonies dating from the last two centuries B.C., confirming the dispersion of the Jews long before the beginning of our era. I will not quote the passages referring to this subject, which are to be found in the writings of Strabo, Philo, Josephus and others, but I will quote a passage from Strabo about the existence of Phoenician settlements at the period, when centuries had passed since the book of Phoenician and Carthaginian history had been closed.

Strabo wrote in 85 B.C., XVIII 3, 15.

'So successful was this colonial enterprise of the Phoenicians—as well in Iberia as outside the Straits—that up to this day the best part of Europe is inhabited by Phoenicians, the Continent as well as the adjacent islands, and that they have taken possession of the whole of (North) Africa in so far as it is inhabitable and not occupied by nomads.'

Not much more than a century later there is no more talk of Phoenician, but only of Jewish settlements in all the places previously occupied by the former. It seems impossible to explain this metamorphosis otherwise than by a fusion of those two nations, who spoke practically the same language and had many ideas and customs in common. The Jews had no colonies, but they found new homes in the many colonies and settlements of the Phoenicians, whom they gradually prevailed upon to adopt their creed and their religious laws and institutions.

Among the various circumstances which made the rapid spread of Christianity possible, the existence of Phoenician colonies in all parts of the world was one of the most important.

CHAPTER V

Called to Berlin—Looking Backward on the Years Spent in the East—Political Outlook

IN the autumn we went down to Jaffa, where we stayed at the comfortable hotel mentioned before. By this time I had grown heartily sick of my post and especially of my work. The purely theoretical problems that had arisen during the Emperor's visit had ceased to interest my Government. There remained nothing for me to do but to listen to the petty local affairs, mostly sterile controversies between the many sects whose representatives would bring their grievances before the Consul. I began to fear that the Foreign Office in Berlin might forget me and possibly leave me in this post for the best part of my life, as it had done in the case of my father. In fact if it had not been for the limit of age, I might have remained Consul in Jerusalem to this day. But there was nothing to be done but to wait patiently.

One afternoon, as I was returning to Jaffa from an excursion of several days to Haifa and Akka, where I visited the spiritual leader of the Behāī branch of the Babi religion, Abbās Efendi, I saw my wife coming towards me with a sheet of paper in her hand. It was a telegram which only I could decipher. She had guessed it must be something important, and looked out for me from the upper terrace of the hotel. In this telegram I was asked whether it would suit me to accept a vacancy in the political (diplomatic) department of the Foreign Office. These were indeed tidings of great joy to me. It is true that I had to take leave of many friends and of

a country which was dear to me as the home of my childhood. But I was happily not so much orientalized as really to regret exchanging the East for my own country. I accepted the offer with enthusiasm and broke up my home in Jerusalem with as much speed as possible. I sailed with my family in December from Jaffa for Constantinople, where I had been instructed to spend a few weeks in order to study the political situation of Germany in the Ottoman Empire under the guidance of our Ambassador, Baron Marschall von Bieberstein. I arrived in Berlin at Christmas and began my work at the Foreign Office just at the beginning of the new century.

Looking back on to the long series of years spent travelling or dwelling in Palestine, Syria, Arabia and Persia, of which I have here recorded my memories, I cannot repress a feeling of regret that so much of the beauty and originality of these countries, after having been a source of interest and delight to Europeans for so many centuries, should have since begun to disappear and to make place for what is least attractive in Western civilization. The Oriental countries I have mentioned—to which may be added Morocco, Abyssinia and Asiatic Turkey—were, when I first knew them, in many respects what they had been in the Middle Ages, in some instances in antiquity. The spread of technical achievements, and especially the introduction of motor traffic, has wrought greater changes all over Asia and North Africa than the most important events in history, such as the conquests of Alexander the Great or of the Mongols. Persia will soon no more be Persia, and the Persians are beginning to resemble the Greeks and the Armenians who have been in close contact with Europeans. Types like Abbās Efendi, in the eyes of his adherents an incarnation of the Deity, will soon no more delight their visitors by their deep culture and wisdom, and by their exquisitely agreeable conversation and

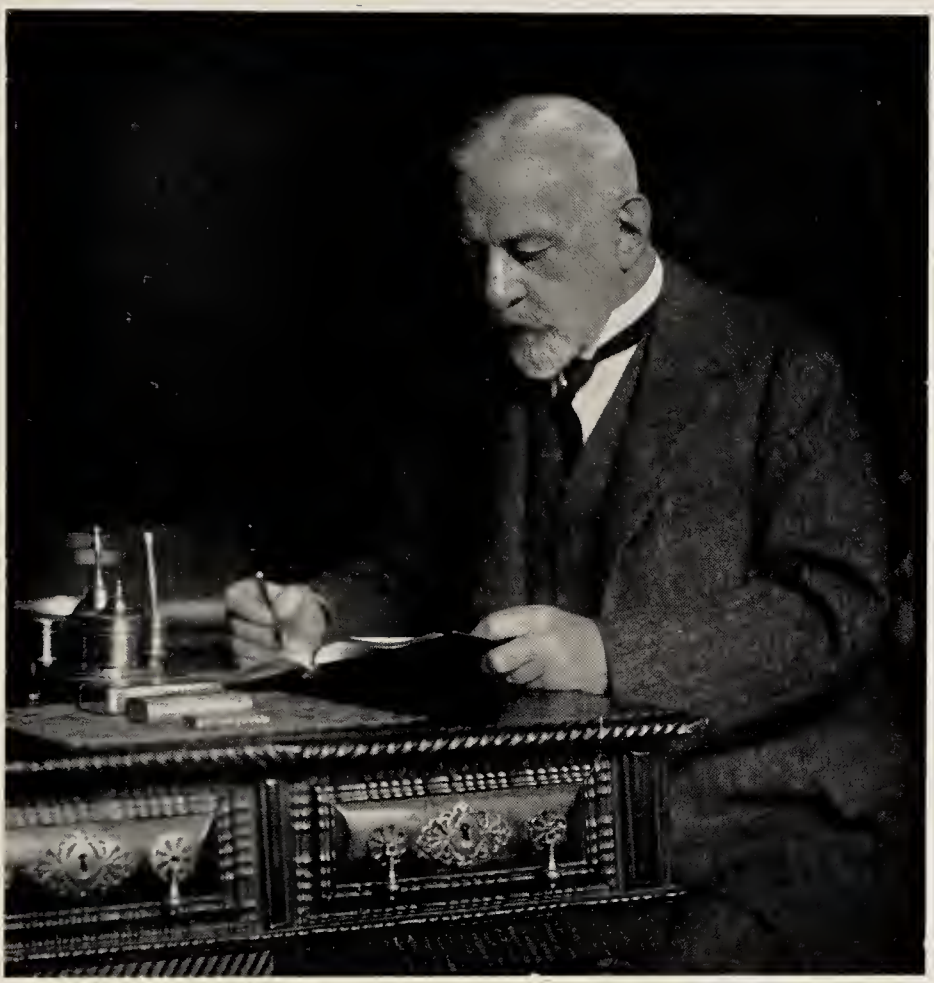
manners. Dignity is being replaced by want of manners in the same way as the fez is being ousted by the bowler, and the turban by the cloth cap.

But what I regret most of all is the rapidly progressing destruction of the old character of Palestine, in which tourism, industrialism and colonization are joining hands. Since all Western and many Eastern nations are interested in the Holy Land with its many relics sacred to Jews, Christians and Muhammedans, would it not have been possible to create an international 'reservation' there to preserve what was left of the traces of its original character and of its unique history? The whole of the civilized world has evidently been too poor to keep that small area free from the invasion of what is called progress and modern development. Humanity with all its riches has not found the means to forgo the profits to be expected from utilizing the water-power of the Jordan or from the possible oilpits near the Dead Sea.

Already, at the time of my second sojourn in Jerusalem, the ravages of colonization and of real or imaginary improvements were appalling. Since then an inexorable war of destruction has been waged on what remains of old Palestine. Nothing can stop or even delay this development. Under these circumstances I am doubly thankful that it has fallen to my lot to see so much of the Near East before its modernisation.

But now I had to put aside my predilection for the East and forgo my regrets for its waning originality, concentrating all my thoughts upon the new tasks that awaited me. My appointment indeed gave me the prospect of a new and more active life than I could have led in the forlorn and out-of-the-way posts I had hitherto occupied. I was now to have my place in the most important department of our foreign service, and I could hope that my experience of Eastern countries might be of some use.

Although I never imagined that it would be possible



THE AUTHOR IN 1929

for me to exercise a decisive influence on those who were at the head of our Foreign Affairs, I thought that being in close touch with them I might find better chances of serving my country than in any Eastern post.

I knew that Germany's position in the world was not an easy one and I felt that much of the impression she produced was brilliant more in appearance than in reality. But during all that time I did not realize how serious the difficulties were that had arisen between England and Germany at the time of the South African War. I thought that misunderstandings like those about the seizure of German ships by the British Navy and other similar occurrences were of a passing character and could not in the long run seriously estrange two nations, who, in my opinion, were destined to be on friendly terms and could never become enemies. I felt sure that a near future would remove all existing misgivings and restore the traditional and, to my mind, natural state of Anglo-German relations. I was confident that it would be possible for me to contribute my modest share to the exertions made in this direction, all the more so as I counted upon the ability of Sir Frank Lascelles, now Ambassador in Berlin, and also upon his personal friendship, notwithstanding the difference in age and in rank that existed between us. I still believe that he did all that was in his power to improve relations between the two countries, in a similar way as Count Metternich endeavoured to do as German Ambassador in London. I was not wrong in so far as in the beginning of 1901 it was not yet too late to restore the old cordial relations; for the same year brought us within reach of an Anglo-German agreement which could be expected to remove all misunderstandings and causes of conflict between England and Germany, besides establishing the peace of Europe on a sound basis.

The events of the following years have frustrated all these hopes and endeavours and ultimately led to what I

had always looked upon—and still consider—the greatest crime and the greatest folly in history, a war between England and Germany. If I had adopted the Oriental way of looking at things, I should be tempted to attribute this tragic issue to Destiny. But such fatalism is not acceptable to the European mind, and I can but quote the words used by Napoleon in a conversation with Goethe: 'Que me voulez-vous avec la destinée? C'est la politique qui est la destinée.'

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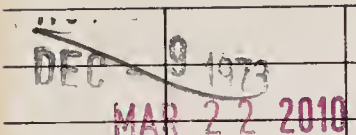

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